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CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY:

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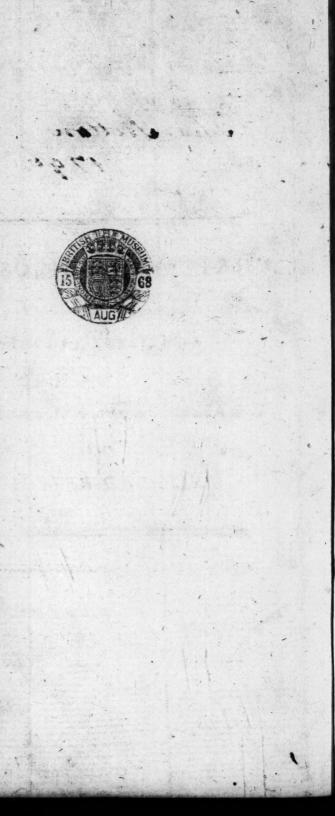
AN ATTEMPT TO DISPLAY

THE

EVIDENCE AND EXCELLENCE

OF

REVEALED RELIGION.



CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY:

OR,

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EVIDENCE AND EXCELLENCE

OF

REVEALED RELIGION.

By VICESIMUS KNOX, D. D.

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, OXFORD; AND NOW MASTER OF TUNBRIDGE SCHOOL.

Hoc PHILOSOPHIE genus in affectibus situm est, verius quam in syllogismis; vita est magis, quam disputatio; AFFLATUS potius quam eruditio; transformatio magis, quam ratio. ERASMUS.

TANEYMA ZΩΟΠΟΙΟΥΝ,

I COR. XV. 45.

Tantum esto docilis et multum in bâc PHILOSOPHIA promovistio.

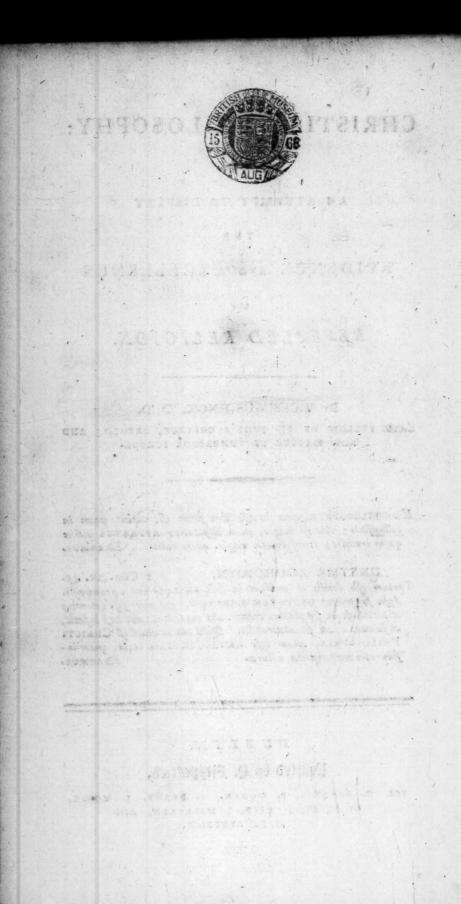
Ipsa suppeditat DOCTOREM SPIRITUM, qui nulli sese lubentius impertit, quam simplicibus animis. At rursum ita non deest insimis, ut summis etiam sit admirabilis. Quid autem aliud est CHRISTI PHILOSOPHIA, quam ipse RENASCENTIAM vocat, quam instauratio bene condita natura.

ERASMUS.

DUBLIN:

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PREFACE.

S every attempt to illustrate and recommend opinions on RELIGION, which oppose prejudices, is peculiarly obnoxious to the misconceptions of the ignorant, the mifrepresentation of the malevolent, and the rash censure of the thoughtless; (who rudely and hastily condemn, what they scarcely allow themselves even time to understand;) I think it proper to entreat all who honour this book with any degree of their attention, duly to consider the AUTHORITIES, human as well as fcriptural, on which it is founded; and not to reject doctrines in which their own happiness is most deeply concerned, till they shall have invalidated those authorities, and proved themselves superior in fagacity, learning, and piety, to the great men whose fentiments I have cited in support of my own. Let the firm phalanx of furrounding authorities

be first fairly routed, before the opponents level their arrows, even bitter words, at him who, in these papers, ventures to enforce a doctrine, unfashionable indeed, but certainly the doctrine of the Gospel.

There is no doubt but that my subject is the most momentous which can fall under the contemplation of a human being; and I therefore claim for it, as the happiness of mankind is at stake, a dispassionate and unprejudiced attention.

The moral world, as well as the political, appears, at present, to be greatly out of order. Moral consusion, indeed, naturally produces political. Let all who love their species, or their country, calmly consider whether the neglect or rejection of Christianity may not be the real cause of both: and let those who are thus persuaded, co-operate with every attempt to revive and diffuse the TRUE SPIRIT OF THE GOSPEL. "Let us meekly "instruct those that oppose Themselves*," (if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the TRUTH, "not being overcome of evil, but overcoming "evil with good†."

^{* 2} Tim. ii. 25. † Romans, xii. 21.

Nor let a private clergyman, however inconfiderable, be thought to step out of his province, in thus endeavouring to tranquillize the tumult of the world, by calling the attention of erring and wretched mortals to the gospel of peace. He is justified, not only by the general principles of humanity, but by the particular command of the religion of which he is a minister. Thus faith the apostle:

"Feed the flock of God, as much as lieth in you, taking the overfight thereof, not by constraint, but willingness; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind*. Take heed to All the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood†."

This I have humbly attempted; and, in imitation of a most excellent prelate[‡], I have adapted my book to ALL; yet various parts of it more particularly to various descriptions of men; some to the great, some to the learned, but the greater part to the PEOPLE: remembering the Apostle's example, who says,

^{* 1} Pet. v. 2. † Acts, xx. 28.

[†] Bishop Saunderson, who preached in an appropriate manner, ad aulam, ad clerum, ad populum. - See the titles of his Sermons.

"To the weak became I as weak, that I "might gain the weak: I made all things to "all men, that I might by all means fave "fome; and this I do for the Gospel's "SAKE, that I might be a partaker thereof "with you*."

And now, readers, before you proceed any farther, let me be permitted to fay to you, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with you." in your progress through this book, and also through life, even to its close.



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SECTION I.

Christian and a resident

Cupimus enim investigare quid verum sit; neque id solum, quod cum veritate, PIETATEM quoque præterea erga Deum habeat conjunctam.

INTRODUCTORY.

ENTER on the subject of this volume with unaffected diffidence. I tread on holy ground with awe. Though much of my life, devoted to letters from the earliest age, has been spent in reading the best writers on the Christian doctrine and more in contemplation of it, yet a fense of its high importance, and of my own fallibility, has long restrained the impulse which prompted me to engage in its public discussion. Nothing but conscious rectitude of intention, co-operating with the hope of obtaining the aid of God's holy Spirit, and the reader's indulgence, could animate the tremulous mind in an enterprise to which it feels and avows itself unequal. A conviction that the subject is peculiarly feafonable, has contributed to overcome reluctance. The TIMES indeed appear to me to call upon every professor of Christianity to vindicate, in the manner best adapted to his abilities and oportunities, its controverted truth, its infulted honour; and if I shall be fortunate enough

enough to communicate one suggestion to the wavering mind, which may conduce to this great purpose, my labour will not be in vain, nor my undertaking deemed rashly adventurous. I shall have accomplished my wish. To dissuse the sunshine of religious hope and considence over the shadowy path of life; to dissipate the gloom of doubt and despair; to save a soul from death; objects so desirable, inspire an ardour which enables zeal to triumph over timidity.

That unbelief in Christ is increasing in the present age, and that the spirit of the times is rather favourable to its increase, has been afferted by high authority, and is too notorious to admit denial. The apostacy of a great nation, in the most enlightened and polished part of Europe; the public, unblushing avowal of atheism among fome of its leaders; the multiplication of books on the Continent, in which Christianity is treated as a mere mode of fanaticism; all these circumstances have combined, with others, to cause not only an indifference to the religion of Christ, but contempt and aversion to his very name. It were easy to cite contumelious reproaches of his person, as well as audacious derials of his claim to divine authority. But I will not pollute my page, which however it may be deformed by error, shall not be stained with the transfusion of It is to be wished that all such works could be configned to immediate and everlasting oblivion; but, I am forry to say that they are diffused with an industry, which, if it appeared in making profelytes to virtue, would be in the highest degree meritorious. Almost every individual in our own country can now read; and manuals

manuals of infidelity, replete with plaufible arguments, in language level to the lowest classes, are circulated among the people, at a price which places them within reach of the poorest reader. They are despised by the rich and neglected by the learned, but they fall into the hands of the poor, to whom any thing in print bears the stamp of authority. At the same time, it must be lamented that there are treatises of a higher order, on the side of insidelity, which come recommended to the superior ranks, to men of knowledge and education, with all the charms of wit and elegance.

But it cannot be faid that the apologists and defenders of Christianity, in our country, have been few, or unfurnished with abilities natural and acquired. Great have been the efforts of our profoundest scholars, both professional divines and laymen, in maintaining the cause of Christianity, and repelling by argument, by ridicule, by invective, by erudition, the affaults of the infidel. But what shall we fay? Notwithstanding their stupendous labours, continued with little intermission, the great cause which they maintained, is evidently, at this moment on the decline. Though many of them, not contented with perfuasion and argument, have professed to DEMONSTRATE the truth of the Christian religion, it is certain that a very great number of men in Christian countries continue unperfuaded, unconvinced, and totally blind to their demonstration. Such being the case, after all their voluminous productions, is it not fair to conclude that their modes of defence, however celebrated, are either erroneous or defective? Had their fuccess been equal to their labours and

pretentions, infidelity must now have been utterly exterminated.

I feel a fincere respect for the learned labours of theologists, the subtilty of schoolmen, the erudition of critics, the ingenuity of controverfialists; but I cannot help thinking that their productions have contributed rather to the amusement of recluse scholars already persuaded of Christianity, than to the conversion of the infidel, the instruction of the PEOPLE. It appears to me, that some of the most elaborate of the writings in defence of Christianity are too cold in their manner, too metaphyfical or abstruse in their arguments, too little animated with the spirit of piety, to produce any great or durable effect on the heart of man, formed as he is, not only with intellectual powers, but with fine feelings and a glowing imagination. They touch not the trembling fibres of fenfibility. They are infipid to the palate of the people. They have no attractions for the POOR, the great multitude to whom the gospel was particularly preached. They are scarcely intelligible but to scholars in their closets, and while they amuse, without convincing the understanding, they leave the most susceptible part of man, his bosom, unaffected. The busy world, eager in pursuit of wealth, honour, pleasure, pays them no regard; though they are the very persons whose attention to religion, which they are too apt to forget entirely, ought chiefly to be folicited. The academic recluse, the theologist by profession, may read them as a task or as an amusement; but he confiders them as works of erudition and exercises of ingenuity, claiming great praise as the product of literary leifure, but little adapted to impress the heart, or convert the infidel or the profligate.

profligate. The people are erring and straying like loft sheep, but in these calls they cannot recognize the voice of the shepherd. Such works indeed seldom reach the people; and while they are celebrated in academic cloisters, their very existence is unknown among the haunts of men, in the bufy hum of cities; where it is most desirable that they should be known, because there the great majority of human creatures is affembled, and there also the poison of temptation chiefly requires the antidote of religion. What avails it that defences of Chriftianity are very learned and very subtle, if they are fo dry and unaffecting as to be confined in their effects to fequestered scholars, far removed from the active world, and probably fo firmly fettled in the faith, as to require no new persuasives, no additional proofs to render them faithful followers of Jesus Christ?

Apologies and attacks of this kind have very little effect in filencing infidel writers or changing their opinions. They frequently furnish fresh matter for dispute, and indeed put arms into the hands of the enemy. By provoking discussion on points that were at rest, they rouse sophistry from its slumbers, and blow the trumpet of polemical wars, which do great mischief before the re-establishment of peace. In the issue, the contending parties are silenced rather from weariness in the contest, than from conviction; and Te Deum, as is usual in other wars, is sung by those who are said to be vanquished, as well as those who claim the honour of undisputed victory.

Thus it has happened that the writings of men, no less benevolent in their intentions than able in their exertions, have sometimes not only done no good to their cause, but great injury. They have revived old cavils and objections, or invented new, in order to display ingenuity in resuting them; cavils and objections which have frequently been answered, or which might never have occurred; but which, when once they have occurred, produce suspicion and unsettled notions on topics never doubted, and among honest men whose faith was firmly established. Such conduct is like that of a physician, who should administer doses of arsenic to his patients, in order to prove to them, at their risk, the sovereign power of his nostrum. The venom, finding a constitution favourable to its operation, triumphantly prevails, and the preventive remedy cannot rescue the sufferer from his hapless fate.

I am perfuaded, that even a fenfible, thinking, and learned man might live his whole life in piety and peace, without ever dreaming of those objections to Christianity, which some of its most celebrated defenders have collected together from all ages and a great variety of neglected books, and then combined in a fingle portable volume, fo as to render it a convenient synopsis of infidelity. What must be the consequence? It must at least disturb the repose of the sensible, thinking, and learned man; and if it should be read and understood by the simple, the unlearned, the unthinking, and the ill-difposed, I am of opinion that its objections would be studied, its folutions neglected; and thus a very large number of recruits enlifted volunteers in the army of unbelievers.

As an exemplification of what I have here-advanced, I mention, in this place, Bishop Warburton's View of Lord Bolingbroke's Philosophy

There

There the unbeliever fees the scattered arguments of fcepticism and unbelief all picked and culled for him, without any trouble of his own, and marked with inverted commas, fo as to direct the eye, without loss of time, to their immediate perufal. The book becomes an anthologia of infidelity. The flowers are gathered from the stalks, and conveniently tied up in a nofegay. The effence is extracted and put into a phial commodious for the pocket, and fitted for hourly use. The late Bishop Horne, in his facetious Letters on Infidelity, has also collected passages from obscure books and pamphlets, and fent them abroad in fuch a manner as must of necessity cause them to be read and received, where they never, would have found their way by their native force. These ingenious and well-meaning divines refuscitate the dead, and give life to the still-born and abortive offspring of dullness and malignity. I might mention many more instances of similar imprudence, in men of the deepest erudition and the fincerest piety; but I am unwilling to follow their example, in pointing out to unbelievers compendiums, abridgments, and manuals of sceptical cavil. To say in their excuse that they refute those arguments which they insert fo liberally from the writings of the unbeliever, may prove our candour, but not our judgment or knowledge of human nature. Evil- is learned fooner and remembered longer than good; and it would be better to let many pamphlets of the deifts fink into oblivion, than to preferve and extend them, by extracting their most noxious parts, and mixing them with the productions of men of learning and piety. The refutations are often long, laboured, and tedious, while the objections are fhort . short and lively. They are therefore either not read or soon forgotten, while a slippant sarcasm attracts attention and fixes itself in the memory. It must also be allowed, that the resultations are too often unsatisfactory: and that the weakness of a sence invites new attacks, and gives fresh courage to the enemy.

I think the ftyle and manner of fome among the celebrated defenders of Christianity extremely improper. It is not respectful. It treats Fesus Christ as if he were inferior to the person who takes upon him to examine, as he phrases it, the pretensions of Jesus Christ. To speak in an authoritative, inquifitorial language of the author of that religion by which the writer himself professes to hope for falvation, can never ferve the cause of Christianity. Think of a poor, frail, finful mortal fitting a felf-appointed judge, and like a lawyer in a human court of judicature, arraigning Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, just as a venal solicitor might have questioned the two thieves that were crucified with him, had they been accused at a modern police-office. The cold yet authoritative ftyle of the tribunal has been much used in examining, as it is called, that religion which brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. You would think the learned theologist, who affumes the office of an examiner, another Pontius Pilate. He fits in the feat of judgment, and with judicial importance coldly pronounces on the words and actions of that Saviour, whom he owns to be the great Captain of salvation.

In such defences or examinations, Jesus Christ is spoken of in terms that must divest him of his glory, and therefore vilify him in the eyes of the gainsayers,

gainfayers, and all unthinking people. But how, on the contrary, do the prophets represent him? Language has no terms of magnificence adequate to his dignity.

The prophets describe Jesus Christ as the most august personage which it is possible to conceive. They speak of him indeed as the seed of the woman and the Son of man; but at the same time describe him of celestial race. They approunce him as a being exalted above men and angels; above all principality and power; as the Word and the Wisdom of God; as the Heir of all things, by whom God made the worlds; as the Bright-iness of God's glory, the express Image of his Person."

Thus speak the prophets of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now let us hear an ingenious apologist and defender of him and his religion. A reverend author, highly estimable for his learning and ingenuity, and whom I sincerely esteem, speaking of Jesus Christ, in a book professedly written to vindicate his truth and honour, repeatedly calls him, "a Jewish peasant," and a "peasant of "Galilee." "For what are we comparing?" says he, (in a comparison of Jesus Christ with Mahomet) "a Galilean peasant, accompanied with a few sishermen, with a conqueror at the head of his army;" and again, in the next page, a Jewish peasant overthrew the religion of the world."

Unbelievers are commonly men of the world; fascinated by its pomps and vanities: Is it the most likely means to overcome their prejudices, and teach them to bow the knee to Jesus, thus to lower his personal dignity? Was there any occasion

for it? Do not the prophets, as I have just now observed, exalt him above every name? Why call him PEASANT? The term I think by no means appropriate to him, supposing that it were not an injudicious degradation of his character in the eyes of unthinking worldlings and malignant unbelievers. There is fomething peculiarly difgufting in hearing dignified ecclefiaftics, living in splendor and affluence entirely in confequence of the religion of Jesus Christ, speaking of him in their defences of his religion, as a PBA-SANT, as a person, compared to themselves, vile and despicable. Such arguments as this appellation is meant to support, will never render service to The representation becomes a Christianity. stumbling-block and a rock of offence. I might however produce feveral other inflances of great writers who have afforded precedents for such degrading appellations of Jesus Christ. But neither the infidel nor the Christian will easily believe that the man who calls his Saviour a peasant, after the glorious representations of him which the prophets give, feels that awe and veneration which is due to the Son of God, the Lord of life, the Saviour and Redeemer. I forbear to specify them. One instance is sufficient to point out my meaning, and fliew the reason why some ingenious apologies for Christianity are totally ineffectual.

Dry argumentation and dull disquisition, unanimated by the spirit of piety and devotion, will never avail to convert 'unbelievers, and to disfuse the doctrines of Christianity. Life, death, heaven and hell, are subjects of too much importance to be treated by a sincere mind, duly impressed by them, with the coolness of a lawyer giving an opinion on a statute or case in which another's proper-

ty or privileges are concerned. The spirit of piety feems to have been wanting in some of the most logical and metaphysical defenders of Christianity. They speak of Christ, when they are examining the truth of the doctrine, with calm indifference, as if they were dull virtuofos discussing the genuineness of a medal, or the authenticity of a manufcript, valuable only as an amufing curiofity. If St. Paul had been no warmer an advocate than certain famous apologists for Christ's doctrine, he would never have prevailed with the Gentiles to relinquish their polytheism, and we of this island should, at this day, have remained in the darkness of idolatry. Without the spirit of piety, all proofs and defences of Christianity are a dead letter. The multitude will not even read them; and infidels, if they do not despise them too much to attend to them at all, will only read to find fresh matter for cavil and objection.

I may be wrong in my theory. I therefore appeal to fact. The fact is evident, that, notwithstanding all that has been written to demonstrate Christianity, by argument drawn from reasoning and history, infidelity has increased, and is every day increasing more and more. Let those who think the dry argumentative apologies irrefiftibly convincing, now bring them forward, and filence the gainfayers at once. The demonstrations of a Huet, the evidences of a Clarke, the reasonings of a Locke, a Grotius, a Hartley, should be prefented in the most striking manner, by public authority, and if they are really efficacious in producing conviction, we may be affured that infidelity will vanish at their appearance, like the mists of an autumnal morning, when the meridian fun breaks forth in full splendor. But the truth is,

they are already very much diffused, and yet the Christian religion is said to be rapidly on the decline.

Therefore it cannot be blameable to attempt fome other method of calling back the attention of erring mortals to the momentous truths of revelation.

I have conceived an idea that our old English divines were great adepts in genuine Christianity, and that their method of recommending it was judicious, because I know it was successful. There was much more piety in the last century than in the present; and there is every reason to believe that insidelity was rare. Bishop Hall appears to me to have been animated with the true spirit of Christianity; and I beg leave to convey my own ideas on the best method of disfusing that spirit, in his pleasingly-pious and simple language.

"There is not," fays the venerable prelate,

of formuch need of learning as of grace to apprehend those things which concern our everlasting peace;

" neither is it our brain that must be set to work,

but our HEARTS. However excellent the use of

" fcholarship in all the sacred employments of

" divinity; yet, in the main act, which imports

falvation, skill must give place to AFFECTION.

" Happy is the foul that is possest of Christ, how

" poor foever in all inferior endowments. Ye are

" wide, O ye great wits, while ye fpend yourselves

" in curious questions and learned extravagancies.

"Ye shall find one touch of Christ more worth to

" your fouls than all your deep and laborious dif-

" quifitions. In vain shall ye feek for this in your

" books, if you miss it in your Bosoms. If you

* know all things, and cannot fay, I know whom

" I have

"I have believed, you have but knowledge enough to know yourselves completely miserable. The deep mysteries of Godliness, which, to the great clerks of the world, are as a book clasped and sealed up, lie open before him, (the pious and devout man) fair and legible; and while those book-men know whom they have heard of, he knows whom he hath believed."

Christianity indeed, like the sun, discovers itself by its own lustre. It shines with unborrowed light on the devout heart. It wants little external proof, but carries its own evidence to him that is regenerate and born of the Spirit. "The truth of Christianity," says a pious author, "is the Spirit of God living and working in it; and when this Spirit is not the life of it, there the outward form is but like the carcase of a demander of the spirit of God!"

Divinity has certainly been confused and perplexed by the learned. It requires to be disentangled and simplified. It appears to me to consist in this single point, the restoration of the divine life, the image of God, (lost or defaced at the fall) by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

When this is restored, every other advantage of Christianity sollows in course. Pure morals are absolutely necessary to the reception of the Holy Ghost, and an unavoidable consequence of his continuance. The attainment of grace is then the unum necessarium. It includes in it all gospel comfort, it teaches all virtue, and infallibly leads to light, life and immortality.

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SECTION II.

On the Sors of Evidence chiefly recommended and attempted to be displayed in this Treatise.

Quid est fideliter Christo credere? est fideliter Dei mandata fervare. Salvian- de Gub. lib. 3-

THINK it right to apprize my reader, on the I very threshold, that if he expects a recapitulation of the external and historical evidence of Christianity, he will be disappointed. For all such evidence I must refer him to the great and illustrious names of voluminous theologists, who have filled with honour the professional chairs of universities. and splendidly adorned the annals of literature. I revere their virtuous characters; I highly appreciate their learned labours; I think the fludent who is abstracted from active life, may derive from them much amusement, while he increases his stores of critical erudition, and becomes enabled to difcourse or dispute on theology. But men, able to command their time, and competently furnished with ability for deep and extensive investigation, are but a small number in the mass of mankind. That fystematic or speculative treatise which may delight and instruct such men, in the cool shade of philosophical retirement, will have little effect on the minds of others who constitute the multitude of mortals, eagerly engaged in providing for the wants of the passing day, or warmly contending for the glittering prizes of fecular ambition. deed, I never heard that the laborious proofs of Christianity,

Christianity, in the historical and argumentative mode, ever converted any of those celebrated enthors on the side of insidelity, who have, from time to time, spread an alarm through Christendom, and drawn forth the desensive pens of every church and university in Europe. The insidel wits wrote on in the same eause; deriving fresh matter for cavil from the arguments of the desenders; and re-assailing the citadel with the very balls hurled from its battlements in supersuous profusion.

What then, it may be justly asked, have I to offer? What is the fort of evidence which I attempt
to display? It is an internal EVIDENCE of the
truth of the gospel, consequent on OBEDIENCE to
its precepts. It is a sort of evidence, the mode of
obtaining which is pointed out by JESUS CHRIST
himself, in the following declaration: "If any
"man will do his will, he shall know of the
"poctrine whether it be of God*."

But how shall he know? BY THE ILLUMINATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD, which is promised by Christ, to those who do his will.

Therefore if any man feriously and earnestly defires to become a Christian, let him begin, whatever doubts he may entertain of the truth of Christianity, by practifing those moral virtues, and cultivating those amiable dispositions, which the written gospel plainly requires, and the grace of God, will gradually remove the veil from his eyes and from his heart, so as to enable him to see and to love the things which belong to his peace, and which are revealed in the gospel only. Let him make the experiment and persevere. The result will be the full conviction that Christianity is true. The

fanctifying Spirit will precede, and the illuminating Spirit follow in confequence.

I take it for granted, that God has given all men the means of knowing that which it imports all men to know; but if, in order to gain the knowledge requisite to become a Christian, it is necessary to read such authors as Grotius, Limborch, Clarke, Lardner, or Warburton, how few, in the great mass of mankind, can possibly acquire that knowledge and consequent faith which are necessary to their salvation?

But every human being is capable of the evidence which arises from the divine illumination. It is offered to all. And they who reject it, and seek only the evidence which human means afford, shut out the sun, and content themselves either with total darkness or the seeble light of a taper.

"There is" (fays the excellent Bishop Sanderfon) "to the outward tender of grace in the mi"nistry of the gospel, annexed an inward offer
"of the same to the HEART, by the SPIRIT of God
"going along with his word, which some of the
fchoolmen call auxilium gratiæ generale, sufficient
of itself to convert the soul of the hearer, if he
do not resist the Holy Ghost, and reject the
grace offered; which, as it is grounded on these
words, Behold I stand at the door and knock, and
upon very many passages of scripture beside, so it
standeth with reason that the offer, if accepted,
should be sufficient, ex parte sua, to do the work,
which, if not accepted, is sufficient to leave the
person, not accepting the same, inexcusable."

The outward testimony to the truth of the gospel, is certainly a very strong one; but yet it is found insufficient without the inward testimony. The best understandings have remained unconvinced by the

outward

persuaded by the co-operation of the inward, the divine irradiation of the Holy Ghost shining upon and giving lustre to the letter of revelation.

But because the doctrine of divine influence on the human mind is obnoxious to obloquy, I think it necessary to support it by the authority of some of the best men and soundest divines of this nation. Such are the prejudices entertained by many against the doctrine of divine influence and the witness of the Spirit, that I cannot proceed a step farther, with hope of fuccess, till I have laid before my reader feveral passages in confirmation of it, from the writings of men who were the ornaments of their times, and who are at this day esteemed no less for their orthodoxy and powers of reason than their eloquence. I make no apology to my reader for the length of the quotations from them, because I am fure he will be a gainer, if I keep filence that they may be heard in the interval. My object is to re-establish a declining opinion, which I think not only true, but of prime importance. I therefore withdraw myself occasionally, that I may introduce those advocates for it, whose very names must command attention. If I can but be instrumental in reviving the true Spirit of Christianity, by citing their authority, their's be the praise, and mine the humble office of recommending and extending their falutary doctrine.

"And if it shall be asked (to express myself nearly in the words of Archbishop Wake) why I so often chuse the drudgery of a transcriber, the reason is shortly this: I hoped that quotations from departed writers of great and deserved same would find a more general and unprejudiced acceptance

with

with all forts of men, than any thing that could be written by any one now living, who, if efteemed by some, is yet in danger of being despised by more; whose prejudice to his person will not suffer them to reap any benefit by any thing, however useful, that can come from him; while such passages as these which I cite, must excite respect and attention, unmixed (as the authors are dead) with any malignant sentiment or prepossession against them, such as might close the eyes of the understanding against the radiance of truth."*

The following text may, I think, confirm the opinion advanced in this Section, that the best EVIDENCE will arise from OBEDIENCE:

[&]quot;And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Grost, whom God hath given to them that "OBEY him," Acts, v. 37.

SECTION

On the Prejudices entertained against this Sort of Evidence, and against all divine and supernatural Influence on the Mind of Man.

CINCE the time of archbishop Laud, the most Celebrated defenders of Christianity have thought it proper to expatiate, with peculiar zeal, on the excellence of natural religion. They probably had reasons for their conduct; but it must not be diffembled, that in extolling natural religion they have appeared to depreciate or superfede revelation. The doctrine of supernatural affiftance, the great privilege of Christianity, has been very little enforced by them, and indeed rather discountenanced, as favouring of enthusiasm, and claiming, if true, a decided superiority over their favourite religion of nature.

Upon this subject, a very sensible writer thus

expresses his opinion:

"Towards making and forming a Christian, if " Supernatural assistance of the divine Spirit was " necessary at the beginning of the gospel, I do

- " not fee what should render it less necessary at any " time fince, nor why it may not be expected now.
- " Human learning and human wisdom have rashly

" and vainly usurped the place of it.

" It is observable that these old principles are " still to be found among diffenters, in a good mea-

" fure, which is the reason why their opponents

" have dropped the use of them.

"As these doctrines were the principles and language of the dissenters, and others, who followed
the standard of the Parliament against King Charles the First, though they were not the particular motives of the war, nor could contract any
just blame from the unhappy issue of that war;
yet, at the restoration of King Charles the Second, the resentment which took place against
dissenters ran high, and I apprehend, led the
church clergy not only to be angry with the men,
but to forsake their principles too, though right
and innocent in themselves, and aforetime held
in common among all Protestants."

This, the author thinks, gave rife to the excessive zeal for enforcing natural religion, and for mere moral preaching, to the exclusion of the distinguishing doctrines of Christ, and particularly those sub-lime mysteries respecting the operation of the Holy Ghost, the very life and soul of Christianity.

"Every thing," fays he, "besides morality began from that time, to be branded with the odious term of enthusiasm and hypocrisy. That the cause of religion (observes the same writer) has described for many years, every person appears sensible. Among the various reasons assigned for it, the principal, in my opinion, is, that the established ministers have suffered it to die in their own hands, by departing from the old method of preaching, and from their first and original tenets; which has given countenance to what is called natural religion, in such a measure, as to thut out revealed religion and supersede the gospel.

"It is in vain to cry out against deists and infidels, when the Protestant watchmen have deserted their "their post, and themselves have opened a gap for the enemy. Learning and oratory, it must be womed, are arrived at great perfection, but our true old divinity is gone. Amid these splendid trisses, the GOSPEL is really LOST.*"

It is certain, that the profligate court of Charles the Second, in its endeavours to discredit the dissenters, many of whom were admirable scholars and divines, as well as holy and exemplary men in private life, contributed much to explode all doctrines concerning the Spirit. Unfortunately those clergymen who wished to be favoured at court, too easily conformed their doctrines to its wishes; and arguments from the pulpit united with farcasms from the seat of the scorner, to render all who maintained the doctrine of grace suspected of enthusiasm and hypocrisy. Ridicule, in the hands of the author of Hudibras, though intended only to serve political purposes, became a weapon that wounded religion in its vitals.

The fect of Christians denominated Quakers, certainly entertain many right notions respecting divine influence: and therefore, as the Quakers were disliked by the church, the doctrines which they maintained were to be treated with contempt. The Spirit, whose operations they justly maintain, became, under the direction of worldly policy, a word of reproach to them. Confequently aspiring clergymen, wishing to avoid every doctrine which could retard their advancement, or fix a stigma of heterodoxy upon them, were very little inclined to preach the necessity of divine illumination. They feared the opprobrious names of enthusiasts or hypocrites, and fo became ashamed of the gospel of Christ. In

See a Letter figned Paulinus, published in 1735.

In process of time, arose the sect of the Methodists; who, however they may be mistaken in some points, are certainly orthodox in their opinions of the divine agency on the human soul. They sound it in the scriptures, in the liturgy, in the articles, and they preached it with a zeal which to many appeared intemperate, and certainly was too little guided by discretion. The consequence was, that the spiritual destrines, already vilified by the court of Charles the Second, and by the adversaries of the Quakers, became objects of general dislike and derision.

In the meantime, the gospel of Jesus Christ suffered by its professed friends as well as declared enemies. Regular divines of great virtue, learning, and true piety, feared to preach the Holy Ghost and its operations, the main doctrine of the gospel, lest they should countenance the Puritan, the Quaker, or the Methodist, and lose the esteem of their own order, or of the higher powers. They often contented themselves, during a long life, with preaching morality only; which, without the Spirit of Christianity, is like a beautiful statue from the hand of a Bacon; however graceful its symmetry and polished its materials, yet wanting the breath of LIFE, it is still but a block of marble.

These prejudices remaining at this day, I have thought it right to recommend the sort of evidence which this book attempts to display, by citing the authority of great divines, who, uninfluenced by secular hopes or sears, have borne witness to the truth as it is in Jesus. They are among the most celebrated theologists of this nation; and such as sew among living or recent writers will presume to vie

with,

with, in extent of knowledge, in power of expreffion, and zeal for Christianity.

Bitter is the anger of controversalists in divinity. Arrows dipt in venom are usually hurled at a writer, who ventures to recommend a doctrine which they disapprove. I must seek shelter under the shields of such men as Bishop Taylor, Doctor Isaac Barrow, and others, in and out of the establishment, who fought a good fight and KEPT THE FAITH, having no regard to worldly and finister motives, but faithfully endeavouring to lead those, over whom they were appointed guides, by the radiance of gospel light, from the shadowy mazes of error into the pleasant paths of piety and peace.

Whatever obloquy may follow the teaching of fuch dostrine, I shall incur it with alacrity, because I believe it to be the truth, and that the happiness of human nature is highly concerned in its general reception. I will humbly say, therefore, with St. Paul, "I am not assumed of the gospel of Christ Jesus, for it is the POWER of God unto salvation."*

And as to those who deny the doctrine of divine influence, I fear they are guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. I speak diffidently, as it becomes every mortal on a subject so momentous; but let those who are eager to deny and even deride the doctrine, consider duly what is meant by the sin against the Holy Ghost, and let them remember this tremendous declaration of our Saviour himself, that blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. † All other sins, we are expressly told.

^{*} Rom. i. 16. + Matth. xii. 31.

told, may be remitted, but on this the gates of mercy are closed. The denial of the Spirit's energy renders the gospel of no effect, extinguishes the living light of Jesus Christ, and involves wretched mortals in the darkness and death of Adam, fallen from the state of primitive persection. It is represented as the greatest of all sins, because it is productive of the greatest misery.

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SECTION IV.

believed and continued has supering

The proper Evidence of the Christian Religion is the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, shining into the Hearts of those who do not close them against its Entrance. The Opinion of Dr. Gloucester Ridley cited.

LORD, but by the HOLY GHOST.* If, then, St. Paul be allowed to have understood the Christian religion, it is certain, that mere human testimony will never convince the insidel, and produce that faith which constitutes the true Christian. Our theological libraries might be cleared of more than half their volumes, if men seeking the EVIDENCE of Christianity, would be satisfied with the declaration of St. Paul, and of the great Author of our religion.

There is a faith very common in the world, which teaches to believe, as an historical fact, that a person of the name of Jesus, a very good man, did live on earth, and that he preached and taught, under the direction of God or divine providence, an excellent system of morality; such as, if duly observed, would contribute to their happiness, and recommend them to divine favour. But this kind of faith is not the right faith; it believes not enough, it is not given by the Holy Ghost; for he, in whom God dwelleth, confesseth that Jesus is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; but they who acknowledge Jesus only as a good

^{* 1} Cor. xiii 3. † 1 John, iv. 13, 14, 15.

man teaching morality, know him not as a SAVIour. Socrates taught fine morality; and fo did Seneca, Epictetus, and many more; but they had not and could not teach the knowledge which leadeth to falvation.

"Illuminating grace," fays Dr. Gloucester Ridley, "consists not in the assent we give to the "history of the gospel, as a narration of matters of fact, sufficiently supported by human evi"Dence; for this may be purely the effect of our study and learning. The collating of copies, the consulting of history, the comparing the assertions of friends, and the concessions of enemies, may necessitate* such a belief, a faith which the devils may have, and doubtless have it. This fort of faith is an acquisition of our own, and not a gift." But faith is the gift of God.

"There may be a faith," continues Dr. Ridley, which is not the work of the Spirit in our hearts, but entirely the effect of human means, our natural faculties affifted by languages, antiquities, manuscripts, criticism, and the like, without any divine aid, except the bare letter of the revelation; and as this faith may rise out of human abilities, so may it be attended with pride in our supposed accomplishments, envy of others superior skill, and bitter strife against those who mistake or oppose such truths; and

^{*} Hisis our in yearen general analyzais, all n rais tou weened of ensequences of synoness. Basit in Pful. 195.—The right faith is not that which is sourced by mathematical demonstration, whether we will or not; but that which grows in the mind from the operation or energies of the Spirit.

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"is therefore no manifestation of that Spirit which resistent the proud, and dispenses its graces only to the humble. This wisdom descendent not from above. But the true saving faith, at the same time that it informs the understanding, influences the will and affections; it enlightens the eyes of the heart*, says the apostle: it is there, in the heart, that the Christian man believeth; and if thou believest with thine heart, thou shalt be saved; while insidelity proceedeth from an averseness of our affections,—from an evil heart of unbelief*."

It is not therefore strange, that learned apologists, well acquainted with scripture, should, after reading these strong declarations, that the HEART must be impressed before faith can be fixed in it, should studiously avoid every topic which addresses itself to the affections, and coldly apply themselves to the understanding, in a language and manner which might become a mathematical lecturer solving a problem of Euclid.

Infidelity is increasing, and will continue to increase, so long as divines decline the means of conversion and persuasion which the scriptures of the New Testament declare to be the only effectual means; so long as they have recourse to human reason and human learning only, in which they will always find opponents very powerful. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, and then she

See Mill's Lectiones Variantes.

† Rom. x. 9.

† Heb. iii. 12.

Acts, xvi. 14.

attended

^{*} Πεφωλισμένους τους οφθαλμους τη καξδιας. Epbesians, i. 18.—Enlightening the eyes of the HEART. Almost all the old MSS. read καξδιας, and not διανοιας, as it stands in our printed copies.

attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. The Lord opens the HEARTS of all men at some period of their lives; but the vanity of the world, the cares of gain, the pride of life, shut them again, and reject the Holy Ghost. It is the business of divines to dispose those who are thus unfortunate and unwise, to be ready to receive the divine guest, should he again knock at the door of their hearts; but in doing this, they must preach the true gospel, which is not a system of mere human morality or philosophy, but the doctrine of grace*.

^{*} It must be taught mediate per verbum, immediate per Spiritum.

SECTION V.

The true and only convincing Evidence of the Religion of Christ, or the Illumination of the Holy Ghost is offered to ALL.

From the eternal Fountain of light, both natural and spiritual, there streams a light which lighteth every one that cometh into the world. Whoever loves that which is good and just and true, and desires to act a virtuous part in his place allotted to him in this world, whether high or low, may be assured of the blessing of heaven, displaying itself not perhaps in worldly riches or honours, but in something infinitely more valuable,—a secret influence upon his heart and understanding, to direct his conduct, to improve his nature, and to lead him, though in the lowly vale, yet along the path of peace.

The nature of all men was depraved by the fall of Adam. The affistance of God's Holy Spirit was withdrawn. Christ came to restore that nature, and to bring down that assistance, and leave it as a GIFT, a legacy to all mankind after his

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In Adam ALL die, says St. Paul, but in Christ shall all be made alive. That is in Adam all die a spiritual death, or lose the Paraclete, the particle of the divine nature, which was bestowed on man on his creation; and in Christ all are made alive, spiritually alive, or rendered capable, if they do not voluntarily choose darkness rather than light, of the divine illumination of

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the Holy Ghost. The film is taken from the eyes of all, but the eye-lids remain, which may be closed by voluntary connivance, or by wicked prefumption.

" I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh .. "

" The grace which bringeth falvation hath ap-" peared unto ALL men."-" This is the light " which lighteth every man that cometh into the " world,"-" It is his will, that all men should "-be faved, and come to the knowledge of the " truth."-" Christ came to save sinners; and we " have before proved, both Jews and Gentiles, " that they are ALL under fin."-" Come unto " me ALL ye that labour and are heavy laden."-" He has propitizted for the fins of the WHOLE " world. His grace has been openly offered to " ALL men in the gospelt."

These passages, which no sophistry can elude, are fufficient to prove that the internal EVIDENCE of the gospel has a great advantage over the external, in the circumstance of its universality. All may be convinced by it who are willingt. But can this be faid of dry, logical, fystematic testimonies, which require learning, fagacity, and zime, to be comprehended? Such testimonies are fit for few, and appear unlikely to produce vital religion in any. They ferve men to talk about, they furnish matter for logomachy; but they leave the heart unaffected. Neither Jesus

^{*} Joel, ii. 28.

^{† 1} Tim. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 15. Rom. iii. 9. Matth. ii. 28. I John, ii. 2 Tit. ii. 2.

[‡] Η μεν γαρ χαρίς εις ΠΑΝΤΑΣ εκκεχυίαι. СНКУ-SOSTOM in Joan. Hom .-- For grace indeed is poured out upon ALL. Christ

Christ nor his apostles thought proper to address men systematically. And are critics, linguists, and logicians wifer than the Author of their religion, and better informed than his apostles?

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The word of God is like a two-edged fword, invincible where it is properly used; but the word of man is comparatively a feeble weapon, without point or edge. The word of man alone, though adorned with all eloquence, learning, and logical fubtilty, will never ftop the progress of unbelief. The word of God, rightly explained, fo as to administer grace to the hearers and readers, will still preserve and extend Christianity, as it has' hitherto done, notwithstanding all the opposition of the world, and those unfeeling children of it, whose hearts are hardened and understandings darkened by the pride of life. If, therefore, as St. James advifes, any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth TO ALL men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. The wisdom here meant is that which maketh wife unto falvation; and certainly is not to be found in the cold didactic writings of those who rely entirely on their own reason, and deny or explain away the doctrine of grace.

Grace is the living gospel. Perishable paper, pens, ink, and printer's types, can never superfede the daily, hourly operation of the omniscient and omnipotent Creator and Preserver of the universe.

Let us remember, "that to EVERY MAN is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal." I Cor. xii. 7.

Mr. Paine, in his attack on Christianity, sums up all his objections at the close. The first and greatest

greatest is this, and I give it in his own words, though it is contrary to my practice, and opinion of propriety, often to cite the cavils of unbelievers: "The idea or belief of a word of God "existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent with itself, for reasons already affigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of an universal language; the mutability of language; the errors to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally fuppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world."

Now these objections cannot possibly be made to the evidence of the Spirit of God, the manifestation of the Spirit given to every man; because the Spirit speaks an univerfal language, addressing itself to the feelings of the heart, which are the fame, whatever founds are uttered by the tongue; because its language is not subject to the mutability of human dialects; because it is far removed from the possibility of misrepresentation by translators; because it cannot be totally suppressed; because it cannot be altered; because it cannot be fabricated or imposed on the world; because it is an EMANATION from the God of truth, the same vesterday, to-day, and for ever. This evidence fheds its light all over the Ghristian world, and is feen, like the fun in the heavens, by all who use their visual powers, unobstructed by felf-raifed clouds of passion, prejudice, vice, and salse philofophy.

SECTION VI.

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Opinions of Bishop Taylor respecting the Evidence of the Holy Spirit; "Shewing" (as he expresses it) "how the Scholars of the University shall become "most LBARNED and most USEFUL."

TTE have examined all ways, in our inqui-V ries after religious truth, but one; all " but Gon's way". Let us, having missed in all " the other, try this. Let us go to God for truth; for truth comes from God only. If we " miss the truth, it is because we will not find it; " for certain it is, that all the truth which God hath, " made NECESSARY, he hath also made legible and " plain; and if we will open our eyes we shall " fee the fun, and if we will walk in the light we " Shall rejoice in the light. Only let us withdraw " the curtains, let us remove the impediments, " and the fin that doth fo easily befet us. That " is God's way. Every man must, in his station, do " that portion of duty which God requires of " him; and then he shall BE TAUGHT OF GOD all " that is fit for him to learn; there is no other way " for him but this. The fear of the Lord is the 4 beginning of wisdom; and a good understanding " have all they that do thereafter. And so said " David of himself: I have more understanding than my teachers; because I keep thy commandments. " And this is the only way which Christ has taught " us. If you ask, what is truth? you must not

· See Bishop Taylor's VIA Intelligentia.

"do as Pilate did, ask the question, and then go away from him that only can give you an anfwer; for as God is the Author of truth, so he
is the Teacher of it, and the way to learn is
this; for so saith our blessed Lord; If any man
will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine

"This text is simple as truth itself, but greatly comprehensive, and contains a truth that alone will enable you to understand all mysteries, and to expound all prophecies, and to interpret all ferriptures, and to fearch into all fecrets, all, I mean, which concern our happiness and our duty. It is plainly to be resolved into this proposition:

"THE WAY TO JUDGE OF RELIGION IS BY DOING OUR BUTY; AND THEOLOGY IS RATHER A DIVINE LIFE THAN A DIVINE KNOWLEDGE.

"In heaven indeed we shall first see and then love; but here on earth we must first love, and love will open our eyes as well as our hearts, and we shall then see and perceive and under-

"Every man understands more of religion by his affections than by his reason. It is not the wit of the man, but the spirit of the man; not fo much his head as his heart that learns the DIVINE PHILOSOPHY.

"There is in every righteous man a NEW VITAL

"PRINCIPLE. The fpirit of grace is the spirit of

"wisdom, and teaches us by secret inspirations,

"by proper arguments, by actual persuasions, by

personal applications, by effects and energies;

and as the soul of man is the cause of all his

vital operations, so is the Spirit of God the

"life"

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" life of that life, and the cause of all actions and productions spiritual; and the consequence of this is what St. John tells us of; Ye have re-ceived the unetion from above, and that anoint-ing teacheth you all things,—all things of some one kind; that is, certainly all things that pertain to life and godliness; all that by which a man is wise and happy. Unless the soul have a new life put into it, unless there be a vital principle within, unless the Spirit of life be the informer of the spirit of the man, the word of God will be as DEAD in the operation as the body in its powers and possibilities.

"God's Spirit does not destroy reason, but heightens it. God opens the heart and creates a new one, and without this creation, this new principle of life, we may hear the word of God, but we can never understand it; we hear the found, but are never the better. Unless there be in our hearts a fecret conviction by the Spirit of God, the GOSPEL ITSELF IS A DEAD LETTER.

"Do we not fee this by daily experience?"

Even those things which a good man and an evil man know, they do not know both alike.

An evil man knows that God is lovely, and that sin is of an evil and destructive nature, and when he is reproved he is convinced; and when he is observed, he is ashamed; and when he has done, he is unsatisfied; and when he pursues his sin, he does it in the dark. Tell him he shall die, and he sighs deeply, but he knows it as well as you. Proceed, and say that after death comes judgment, and the poor man believes and trembles; and yet, after all this, he runs

" runs to commit his fin with as certain an event" and resolution as if he knew no argument against " it.

" Now fince, at the same time, we see other " persons, not so LEARNED, it may be, not so " much versed in the scriptures, yet they say a " thing is good and lay hold of it. They believe " glorious things of heaven, and they live accord-" ingly, as men that believe themselves. What " is the reason of this difference? They both read " the scriptures; they read and hear the same " fermons; they have capable understandings; " they both believe what they hear and what they " read; and yet the event is vaftly different. The " reason is that which I am now speaking of: the " one understands by one principle, the other by 44 another; the one understands by NATURE, the " other by GRACE; the one by human learning, the other by DIVINE; the one reads the fcrip-" tures without, and the other within; the one " understands as a fon of man, the other as a " fon of God; the one perceives by the propor-" tions of the world, the other by the measures " of the Spirit; the one understands by REASON, " the other by LOVE; and therefore he does not " only understand the fermons of the Spirit and " perceive their MEANING, but he pierces deeper, " and knows the meaning of that meaning; that is, the SECRET OF THE SPIRIT, that which " is pritually discerned, that which gives life to " the proposition and activity to the soul. And " the reason is, that he hath a divine principle " within him, and a new understanding; that is is pl aly, he hath Love, and that is more than " KNOWLEDGE, as was rarely well observed by " St.

St. Paul. Knowledge puffeth up; but charity* diffieth; that is, charity maketh the best scho-

" lars. No fermons can build you up a holy

" building to God, unless the love of God be in

" your hearts, and purify your fouls from all

" filthiness of the flesh and spirit,

" A good life is the best way to understand wis-"dom and religion, because, by the experiences " and relishes of religion, there is conveyed to "them a fweetness to which all wicked men are " ftrangers. There is in the things of God, to those "who practife them, a deliciousness that makes us "love them, and that love admits us into God's cabinet, and firangely clarifies the understanding by " the purification of the heart. For when our reason " is raifed up by the Spirit of Christ, it is turned " quickly into EXPERIENCE; when our faith relies " upon the principles of Christ, it is changed into " vision; and so long as we know God only in the " ways of men, by contentious learning, by ARGUING " and difpute, we see nothing but the shadow of " him, and in that shadow we meet with many dark appearances, little certainty, and much " conjecture; but when we know him how erro-" partine, yadnen rosea, with the eyes of holiness " and the instruction of gracious experiences, with " a quiet spirit and the peace of enjoyment, then " we shall hear what we never heard, and see what " our eyes never faw; then the mysteries of Godli-" ness shall be open unto us, and clear as the win-"dows of the morning; and this is rarely well ex-"pressed by the apostle. " If we stand up from " the dead and awake from fleep, then Christ shall "give us LIGHT."

"For though the scriptures themselves are write"
ten by the Spirit of God, yet they are written
within and without; and besides the light that
shines upon the sace of them, unless there be a light
fining within our hearts, unfolding the leaves, and
interpreting the mysterious sense of the Spirit,
convincing our consciences and preaching to our
hearts; to look for Christ in the leaves of the
gospel, is to look for the living among the dead.
There is a life in them; but that life is, according to St. Paul's expression, hid with Christ in
God, and unless the spirit of God draw it forth,
we shall not be able.

"Human learning brings excellent ministeries towards this: it is admirably useful for the reproof of herefies, for the detection of fallacies, for the letter of the scriptures, for collateral testimonies, for exterior advantages; but there is fomething beyond this, that human learning without the addition of divine can never reach.

"A good man, though unlearned in fecular knowledge, is like the windows of the temple, narrow without and broad within; he fees not for much of what profits not abroad; but whatfower, is within, and concerns religion and the glorifications of God, that he fees with a broad infpection; but all human learning without God is but blindness and folly. One man discourses of the facrament, another receives Christ; one discourses for or against translubstantiation; but the good man feels himself to be changed, and fo joined to Christ, that he only understands the true sense of translubstantiation while he becomes to Christ bone of his bone, slesh of his slesh, and of the same spirit with his Lord.

" From

From holiness we have the best instruction.
For that which we are taught by the Holy Spirit of God, this new nature, this vital principle within us, it is that which is worth our learning: not vain and empty, idle and insignificant notions, in which, when you have laboured till your eyes are fixed in their orbs, and your stesh unsix.
Get from its bones, you are no better and no wifer.
Get If the Spirit of God be your teacher, he will teach you such truths as will make you know and love God, and become like to him, and ensity in the passing from similitude to union and eternal fruition.

"Too many scholars, have lived upon air and " empty notions for many ages past, and troubled " themselves with tying and untying knots, like " hypochondriacs in a fit of melancholy, thinking " of nothings, and troubling themselves with non " things, and falling out about nothings, and be-"ing very wife and very learned in things that are " not, and work not, and were never planted in " Paradise by the finger of God. If the Spirit of "God be our teacher, we shall learn to avoid evil " and to do good, to be wife and to be holy, to be " profitable and careful; and they that walk in this " way shall find more peace in their consciences, " MORE SKILL IN THE SCRIPTURES, more fatif-" faction in their doubts, than can be obtained by " all the polemical and impertinent disputations " of the world. The man that is wife, he that is " conducted by the Spirit of God, knows better " in what Christ's kingdom doth consist than to "throw away his time and interest, his peace and " fafety, for what? for religion? no: for the body " of religion? not so much: for the garment of " the

"the body of religion? no, not for so much: but
"for the fringes of the garment of the body of
"religion; for such, and no better, are many re"ligious disputes; things, or rather circumstances
"and manners of things, in which the soul and
"spirit are not at all concerned. The knowledge
"which comes from godliness is Suoregov to muons
"anoduzus, something more certain and divine
"than all demonstration and human learning.

"And now to conclude :- to you I fpeak, fathers " and brethren, you who are or intend to be of the " clergy; you see here the best compendium of your " fludies, the best alleviation of your labours, the "truest method of wisdom. It is not by reading " multitudes of books, but by studying the truth " of God; it is not by laborious commentaries of " the doctors that you can finish your work, but " the exposition of the Spirit of God; it is not " by the rules of metaphyfics, but by the propor-"tions of holiness; and when all books are read. " and all arguments examined, and all authorities " alledged, nothing can be found to be true that is " unholy. The learning of the fathers was more "owing to their piety than their skill, more to God "than to themselves. These were the men that " prevailed against error, because they lived accord-"ing to truth. If ye walk in light, and live in " the spirit, your doctrines will be true, and that "truth will prevail.

"I pray God to give you all grace to follow this

wisdom, to study this learning, to labour for the
understanding of godliness; so your time and
your studies, your persons and your labours,
will be holy and useful, sanctified and blessed,
beneficial to men and pleasing to God, through
him

" him who is the wisdom of the Father, who is made to all that love him, wisdom, and righte" ousness, and fanctification, and redemption."

Will any one among our living theologists controvert the merits of Bishop Taylor? Is there one whom the public judgment will place on an equality with him? Will any one stigmatize him as an ignorant enthusiast? His strength of understanding and powers of reasoning are strikingly exhibited in his Ductor dubitantium, in his Liberty of prophefying, and in his polemical writings. I must conclude, that he understood the Christian religion better than most of the sons of men; because, to abilitles of the very first rank, he united in himself the finest feelings of devotion. His authority must have weight with all ferious and humble inquirers into the fubject of Christianity, and his authority ftrongly and repeatedly inculcates the opinion which I wish to maintain, that the best evidence of the truth of our religion is derived from the operation of the Holy Spirit on every heart which is disposed to receive it.

And I wish it to be duly attended to, that the discourse from which the above extracts are made, was not addressed to a popular assembly, but to the clergy of an university, and at a solemn visitation. The Bishop evidently wished that the doctrines which he taught might be disseminated among the people by the parochial clergy. They were disseminated; and in consequence of it, Christianity slourished. They must be again disseminated by the Bishops and all parochial clergy, if they sincerely wish to check the progress of insidelity. The minds of men must be impressed with the sense of an instruction of the christian religion, or

they will reject it for the morality of Socrates, Seneca, the modern philosophers, and all those plaufible reasoners, to whom this world and the things which are feen are the chief objects of attention. The old divines taught and preached with wonderful efficacy, because they spoke as men having authority from the Holy Ghoft, and not as the disputers of this world, proud of a little fcience, acquired from heathen writers in the cloisters of an academy. There was a celestial glory diffused around the pulpits of the old divines; and the hearers, ftruck with veneration, listened to the preacher as to an undoubted oracle. Full of grace were his lips; and moral TRUTH was beautifully illuminated by divine. She eafily won and firmly fixed the affections of men, clothed, as the was, with light as with a garment.

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SECTION VII.

Passages from the celebrated Mr. John Smith, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge, corroborative of the Opinion that the best Evidence of the Christian Religion arises from the Energy of the Holy Spirit*.

"DIVINE truth is not to be discerned so much in a man's brain as in his heart. There is a divine and spiritual sense which alone is able to converse internally with the life and soul of divine truth, as mixing and uniting itself with it; while vulgar minds behold only the body and outside of it. Though in itself it be most intelfligible, and such as the human mind may most easily apprehend, yet there is an incrustation, as the Hebrew † writers call it, upon all corrupt minds, which hinders the lively taste and relish of it.

"The best acquaintance with religion is a "KNOWLEDGE TAUGHT OF GOD!: it is a light which descends from heaven, which alone is able to guide and conduct the souls of men to that heaven whence it comes. The Christian religion is an influx from God upon the minds of good men; and the great design of the gospel is to unite human nature to divinity.

"The gospel is a mighty efflux and emanation of life and spirit, freely issuing forth from an

^{*} See his Select Discourfes

[†] Incrustamentum immunditiei -- An incrustation of fith.

^{\$} Deadidaxtos yvoris.

[&]quot; omnipetent

"omnipotent fource of grace and love; that god-"like, vital influence, by which the Divinity de-" rives itself into the fouls of men, enlivening "and transforming them into its own likeness, "and strongly imprinting upon them a copy of et its own beauty and goodness: like the spiritual " virtue of the heavens, which spreads itself freely " upon the lower world, and fubtilely infinuating "itself into this benumbed, feeble, earthly mat-"ter, begets life and motion in it; briefly, it is " that whereby God comes to dwell in us, and we " in him.

"The apostle calls the law, the ministration of " the letter and of death, it being in itself but a " dead letter, as all that which is without a man's " foul must be; but on the other side, he " calls the gospel, because of the intrinsical and " vital administration of it in living impressi-" ons upon the fouls of men, the ministration of the " Spirit, and the ministration of righteousness; by which he cannot mean the HISTORY of the gof-" pel, or those CREDENDA propounded to us to " believe; for this would make the gospel itself as "much an external thing as the law was; and fo " we fee that the preaching of Christ crucified was " to the Jews a flumbling-block, and to the Greeks " foolishness. But indeed he means a VITAL EFFLUX " from God upon the fouls of men, whereby they " are made partakers of life and strength from him. "Though the hiftory and outward communicati-

"on of the gospel to us in scriptis is to be always " acknowledged as a special mercy and advantage, " and certainly no less privilege to the Christians, " than it was to the Jews, to be the depositaries of " the oracles of God, yet it is plain that the apof-Marie and

"tle, where he compares the law and the gospel, means something which is more than a piece of book-learning, or an historical narration of the free love of God, in the several contrivances of it for the redemption of mankind.

"The evangelical or new law is an efflux of life, and power from God himself, the original of life and power, and produceth life wherever it comes; and to this double dispensation of law and gospel does St. Paul clearly refer, 2 Cor. iii. 3. You are the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.—Not in tables of fone; which last words are a plain gloss upon that mundane kind of administering the law, in a mere external way, to which he opposeth the Gospel.

"The gospel is not so much a fystem and body of faving divinity, as the spirit and vital influence of it spreading itself over all the powers of men's fouls, and quickening them into a DIVINE LIFE; it is not so properly a doctrine that is wrapt in ink and paper, as it is vITALIS SCIENTIA, a living impression made on the soul and spirit. The gospel does not so much consist in verbis as in virtute; in the written word, as in an internal energy."

He who wishes to have an adequate idea of this profound scholar and most excellent man, will find a pleasing account of him in Bishop Patrick's sermon at his funeral, subjoined to the Select Discourses, which abound with beautiful passages, illustrative of the true Christian philosophy.

SECTION VIII.

Dr. Isaac Barrow's Opinion of the Evidence of Christianity, afforded by the illuminating Operation of the Holy Spirit; and on the Holy Spirit in general.

UR reason is shut up, and barred with various appetites, humours, and passions against gofof pel truths; nor can we admit them into our hearts, except God, by his spirit, do fet open our mind, and work a free passage for them into us. It is he " who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that must, as St. Paul speaketh, illustrate our hearts with the knowledge of thefe things. An UNCTION of from the Holy One, clearing our eyes, foftening our hearts, healing our diftempered faculties, must, " as St. John informeth us, TEACH and persuade us " this fort of truths. A hearty belief of these " feemingly incredible propositions must indeed be, " as St. Paul calleth it, the GIFT of God, proceeding from that Spirit of faith whereof the fame " apostle speaketh; such faith is not, as St. Basil " faith, engendered by geometrical necessities, but by the effectual operations of the Holy Ghoft. Flesh " and blood will not reveal to us, nor can any man " with clear confidence fay that Jesus is the Lord " (the MESSIAS, the infallible Prophet, the uni-" versal Lawgiver, the Son of the living God) but " by the Holy Ghost. Every spirit which sincerely " confesseth him to be the Christ, we may, with St. "John, safely conclude to be of God; for of our-" felves

" felves we are not sufficient, as the apostle says, " Aoyi & so sair, to reason out or collect any of " thefe things. We NEVER, of our own accord, " without DIVINE ATTRACTION, Should come unto " Christ; that is, should effectually consent unto and embrace his institution, consisting of such unplausi-" ble propositions and precepts. Hardly would his own disciples, who had so long enjoyed the light of his conversation and instruction, admitted it, if " he had not granted them that Spirit of truth, whole work it was odnyson, to lead them in this unknown and uncouth way; and share to tell them again " and again, that is, to inftil and inculcate thefe " crabbed truths upon them; υπομιμιησκειν, to ad-" monish, excite, and urge them to the marking and " minding them; hardly, I fay, without the guidance of this Spirit, would our Lord's disciples have admitted divers evangelical truths, as our Lord " himself told them. I have, said he, many things befide to fay to you, but ye cannot as yet bear them; but when he, the Spirit of truth, shall " come, he shall conduct you into ALL TRUTH. " As for the mighty fages of the world, the

learned fcribes, the fubtle disputers, the deep politicians, the wise men according to the slesh, the
men of most refined judgment and improved REASON

in the world's eye, they were more ready to deride than to regard, to impugn than to admit these

doctrines; to the Greeks, who fought wifdom, the

preaching of them feemed foolifhnefs.

"It is true, some few sparks or flashes of this diwine knowledge may possibly be driven out by rational consideration. Philosophy may yield some
twilight glimmerings thereof. Common reason

" may dictate a faint confent unto, may produce a cold tendency after some of these things; but a "; clear perception, and a resolute persuasion of mind, that full affurance of faith and inflexible confession of hope opendoyed THE ENTEROS and INNE, which " the apostle to the Hebrews speaks of, that full af-66 furance of understanding, that abundant knowledge of the divine will in all spiritual wisdom and " understanding, with which St. Paul did pray "that his Coloffians might be replenished; " these so perfect illustrations of the mind, so " powerful convictions of the heart, do argue imse mediate influences from the Fountain of life and wisdom, the DIVINE SPIRIT. No external instruc-"tion could infuse, no interior discourse could excite " them; could penetrate these opacities of ignorance, and diffipate these thick mists of prejudice, where-" in nature and custom do involve us; could so " thoroughly awaken the lethargic flupidity of our " fouls : could supple the refractory stiffness of our " wills; could mollify the stony hardness of our " hearts; could void our natural aversion to such " things, and quell that people oueros, that carnal " mind, which, St. Paul fays, is enmity against God, " for it is not subject to the law of God, neither en indeed can be; could depress those υψωματα, " those lofty towers of felf-conceit, reared against " the knowledge of God, and demolish those " οχυρωματα, those bulwarks of self-will and perverse " ftomach, opposed against the impressions of divine " faith, and captivate may voque, every conceit and " device of ours to the obedience of Christ and his " discipline. Well, therefore, did St. Paul pray in " behalf of his Ephefians, that God would bestow ee on

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"on them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the acknowledgment of him, and that the eyes of their mind might be enlightened, so as to know the hope of their calling; that is, to understand and believe the doctrines of Christianity.****

"We proceed now to the peculiar offices, functions, and operations of the Holy Spirit: Many
fuch there are in an especial manner attributed or
appropriated to him; which, as they respect God,
seem reducible to two general ones: the declaration of God's mind, and the execution of his will;
as they are referred to man, (for in regard to
other beings, the scripture doth not so much consider what he performs, it not concerning us to
know it,) are especially the producing in us all
actions requisite or conducible to our eternal happiness and salvation; to which may be added, the
intercession between God and man, which jointly
respecteth both.

"First, it is his especial work to disclose God's mind to us; whence he is styled the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit of revelation; for that all supernatural light and wisdom have ever proceeded from him. He instructed all the prophets that have been since the world began, to know, he enabled them to speak, the mind of God concerning things present and suture. Holy men (that have taught men their duty, and led them in the way to bliss) were but his instruments, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"By his inspiration the holy scriptures (the most full and certain witness of God's mind, the law and testimony by which our life is to be directed and regulated) were conceived. He guided the apostles

" apostles into all truth, and by them instructed the world in the knowledge of God's gracious in"tentions towards mankind, and in all the holy
mysteries of the gospel: That which in other ages
was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is
now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the
Spirit. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither
have entered into the heart of man, the things which
God hath prepared for them that love him; but God
hath revealed them to us by his Spirit, saith St Paul.
All the KNOWLEDGE we can pretend to in these
things doth proceed merely from his revelation,

doth wholly rely upon his authority. "To him it especially belongs to execute the " will of God, in matters transcending the ordi-" nary power and course of nature. Whence he is called the power of the Most High, (that is, the " fubstantial power and virtue of God,) the finger of God (as by comparing the expression of St. " Luke and St. Matthew may appear); and what-" ever eminent God hath defigned, he is faid to " have performed by him; by him he framed the world, and (as Job speaketh) garnished the heawens. By him he governeth the world, fo that " all extraordinary works of Providence, (when God, beside the common law and usual course of nature, doth interpose to do any thing,) all " miraculous performances are attributed to his "energy. By him our Saviour, by him the apof-"tles, by him the prophets, are expressly faid to " perform their wonderful works; but especially " by him God manages that great work, fo ear-" neftly defigned by him, of our falvation; work-"ing in us all good dispositions, capacifying us " for

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" for falvation, directing and affifting us in all our actions tending thereto.

." We naturally are void of those good dispositi-" ons in understanding, will, and affections which " are needful to render us acceptable unto God, " fit to ferve and pleafe him, capable of any favour " from him, of any true happiness in ourselves. " Our minds naturally are blind, ignorant, stupid, "giddy, and prone to error, especially in things "fupernatural and spiritual, and abstracted from "ordinary fense. Our wills are froward and " Rubborn, light and unftable, inclining to evil, " and averse from what is truly good; our affec-"tions are very irregular, diforderly, and unfet-" tled; to remove which bad dispositions, (incon-" fiftent with God's friendship and favour, driving " us into fin and mifery,) and to beget those con-" trary to them, the KNOWLEDGE and belief of "divine truth, a love of goodness and delight "therein; a well composed, orderly, and steady " frame or spirit, God in mercy doth grant to us " the virtue of his Holy Spirit; who first opening " our hearts, fo as to let in and apprehend the light " of divine truth, then, by reprefentation of pro-" per arguments, perfuading our reason to embrace "it, begetteth diviue knowledge, wisdom, and " faith in our minds, which is the work of illumi-" nation and instruction, the first part of his " office respecting our falvation.

"Then by continual impressions he bendeth our inclinations, and mollisieth our hearts, and tempereth our affections to a willing compliance with God's will, and a hearty complacence in that which is good and pleasing to God; so breeding all pious and virtuous inclinations in

" us, reverence towards God, charity to men,

" fobriety and purity as to ourselves, with the rest

" of those amiable and heavenly virtues of foul,

"which is the work of fanctification, another

" great part of his office.

"Both these operations together (enlightening our minds, sandifying our wills and affections)

"do conflitute and accomplish that work, which

" is styled the regeneration, renovation, vivifica-

"tion, new creation, refurrection of a man; the

" faculties of our fouls being so improved, that we become, as it were, other men thereby; able

" and apt to do that for which before we were

" altogether indisposed and unfit.

"He also directeth and governeth our actions, continually leading and moving us in the ways

of obedience to God's holy will and law. As

"we live by him, (having a new spiritual life im-

" planted in us,) fo we walk by him, are continually

" led and acted by his conduct and help. He re-

claimeth us from error and fin; he supporteth

" and firengtheneth us in temptation; he advifeth

" and admonisheth, exciteth and encourageth us

" to all works of piety and virtue.

"Particularly he guideth and quickeneth us in devotion, shewing us what we should ask, raising

"in us holy defires and comfortable hopes, dif-

" pofing us to approach unto God with firm dif-

" positions of mind, love, and reverence, and

" humble confidence.

"It is also a notable part of the Holy Spirit's office to comfort and sustain us in all our religi-

" ous practice, fo particularly in our doubts, dif-

"ficulties, distresses, and afflictions; to beget joy,

" peace, and satisfaction in us, in all our per-

" formances,

formances, and in all our fufferings, whence

" the title of Comforter belongeth to him.

"It is also another part thereof to assure us of God's gracious love and favour, and that we are his children; confirming in us the hopes of our everlasting inheritance. We seeling ourselves to live spiritually by him, to love God and good-iness, to thirst after righteousness, and to delight in pleasing God, are thereby raised to hope God loves and favous us; and that he having, by so authentic a seal, ratisfied his word and promise, having already bestowed so sure a pledge, so precious an earnest, so plentiful sirst-fruits, will

of promifed us, of everlafting joy and blifs."

Let no man be afraid or ashamed of maintaining opinions on the divine energy, which are thus supported by the first of scholars and philosophers.

ISAAC BARROW.

SECTION IX.

Bishop Bull's Opinion on the Evidence of the Spirit of God on the Mind of Man, and its Union with it; the loss of that Spirit by Adam's Fall, and the Recovery of it by Christ.

"THE second way," says Bishop Bull, "by which the Spirit of God witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the sons of God, is by enlightening our understandings, and strengthening the eyes of our minds, as occasion requires, to discern those gracious fruits and effects which God hath wrought in us.

" The Spirit of God, which in the first beginining of things moved upon the face of the great "deep, and invigorated the chaos, or dark and " confused heap of things, and caused light to " fhine out of that darkness, can, with the great-"est ease, when he pleases, cause the light of "divine consolation to arise and shine upon the "dark and disconsolate soul. And this he often "doth. I may here appeal to the EXPERIENCE of " many good Christians, who sometimes find a of fudden joy coming into their minds, ENLIGHT-" ENING their UNDERSTANDINGS, dispelling all " clouds from thence, warming and enlivening " their affections, and enabling them to difcern " the graces of God shining in their brightness, "and to FEEL them vigorously acting in their " fouls, fo that they have been, after a fort, "TRANSFIGURED with their Saviour, and wished, " with

"with St. Peter, that they might always dwell on that mount Tabor.***

"Man may be confidered in a double relation; " first in relation to the natural, animal, and earthly " life; and so he is a perfect man, that hath only-" a reasonable soul and body adapted to it; for the " powers and faculties of these are sufficient to " fuch a life. But secondly, man may be consi-"dered in order to a supernatural end, and as de-" figned to a spiritual and celestial life; and of this " life the SPIRIT OF GOD is the principle. For " man's natural powers and faculties, even as they " were before the fall, ENTIRE, were not fufficient or able of themselves to reach such a super-" natural end, but needed the power of the "DIVINE SPIRIT to strengthen, elevate, and " raise them. He that denies this, opposes him-" felf against the stream and current of the holy " fcriptures, and the confent of the Catholic "church. Therefore to the perfect constitution of man, confidered in this relation, a reasonable " foul and a body adapted thereunto are not fuf-" ficient; but there is necessarily required an union " of the DIVINE SPIRIT with both, as it were "a THIRD ESSENTIAL PRINCIPLE. This, as it " is a certain truth, fo it is a great MYSTERY OF " CHRISTIANITY. ***

"The great Basil, in his homily intitled, Quod "Deus non est Author peccati, speaking of the nature of man, as it was at first created, hath these words: * What was the chief or principal good it

^{* &}quot;Τὶ δὲ ἦν αὐτῆ τὸ προηξέμενον ἀζαθὸν; ἡ προσεδημέα
"του θεϋ, κὰ ἡ διὰ τῆς ἀγάπης συνάθεια. ἦς ἐκπεσῦσα.
" τοῖς ποικίλοις κὰ πολυθρόποις ἀβἡωτήμασιν ἐκακώθη."

[&]quot; enjoyed?

" enjoyed? THE ASSESSION OF GOD AND ITS CON-" JUNCTION WITH HIM BY LOVE; from which, when " it fell, it became depraved with various and mani-" fold evils. So in his book, de Spiritu Sancto, cap. " 15, he plainly tells us, * The dispensation of God " and our Saviour towards man, is but the recalling of " him from the fall, and his return into the friendship of " that God, from that alienation which sin had caused. "This was the end of Christ's coming in the flesh, of " his life and conversation described in the gospel, of his " passion, cross, burial, and resurrection; that man, who " is faved by the imitation of Christ, might regain that "ANTIENT ADOPTION. Where he plainly sup-" poseth that man before his fall had the adoption " of a fon, and consequently the Spirit of adop-"tion. And fo he expressly interprets himself "afterwards in the fame chapter: By the + Holy "Spirit we are restored into paradife, we regain the kingdom of heaven, we return to the adoption of " fons. Again, (Homil. adverf. Eunomium 5, p. 117.) "which have these express words: # We are called ss in

^{† &}quot; Διὰ ωνεύμια] Φ ὰγίε, ἡ εἰς παράδεισον ἀποκαλάσ-" τασις ἡ εἰς Βασιλείαν έρανῶν ἄνοδ Φ ἡ εἰς υἰοθεσίαν " ἐπάνοδ Φ. Vide ejusdem Libri, cap. 9."

^{‡ &}quot; Ἐν ἀγιασμῶ τῷ Φνεύμα] Εκλήθημεν, ὡς ὁ ἀπόσ-" τολ Θο διδάσκει, τῷτο ἡμᾶς ἀνακαινοῖ, κỳ πάλιν ςἰκόνας " ἀναδείκνυσι

in the sanctification of the Spirit, as the apostle

teacheth. This (Spirit) renews us, and makes us

" again the image of God, and by the laver of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghoft, we.

" are adopted to the Lord, and the new creature again.

" partakes of the Spirit, of which being deprived, it.

" had waxed old. And thus man becomes again the.

" image of God, who had fallen from the divine simili-

tude, and was become like the beafts that perish.

"St. Cyril (7th Dial. de Trin. p. 653.) delivers

"the same doctrine with great perspicuity and elegancy, in these words: * For when the animal

" (viz. man) had turned afide unto wickedness, and out.

of too much love of the flesh had superinduced on himself.

" the disease of fin, THAT SPIRIT WHICH FORMED.

46 HIM AFTER THE DIVINE IMAGE, AND AS A

" ล่งลองเหงบอง วิธรี, อีเลิ มษาคูซี ซลเผมโรงเอาโสร หู ล่งละสะ-

" νώσεως ανεύμα] Τάγια υίοθετάμεθα πυζίω καινή πάλιν

" มีโฮเร นะใสมัสนธิสหรรส รอบ สหยันสโด, รี สะดุ ธิระดูทุนยท

" πεπαλαίωλο" είκων πάλιν θεθ ο άνθρωπος έκπεσων της

" อุ่นอเอาที่ 🕒 ชที่ร มิย์สรุ, หลู สาสอุสธบุนอีกทิยิเร มีทั้งยอเง ส่งอท์-

" τοις κή ὁμοιωθείς αὐτοίς."

* " Διανευευκότ ο γάς τε ζών ως ός το ωλημμηλές, κ

ε την είς ποίητον αμαβίαν έχ της είσαπαν Φιλοσαρχίας ήρ-

" ρωτηκότω, τὸ πρὸς θείαν εἰκόνα διαμορφέν αὐτόν, κζ

« σημάνθευ δίκην απορρήτως ενθεθειμένου απειοσΦίζεθο ωνεύμα,

" Φθαρίον τε έτω, κ απαλλές, κ τί γάρ έχι τῶν ἐκτόπων

" συνειλοχὸς ἀναπέφανται; ἐπεί δὲ ὁ τῶν ὁλων γενεσιμεγὸς

" ἀνακομίζειν εθέλεν εἰς έδραιότηλα, κζ ἐυκοσμίαν την ἐν ἀς-

" χαις τὸ διολισθήσαν είς Φθοράν, παράσημόντε, κζ άκαλλές

· διά την είσποίη ου γείουδε άμας δίων, ενήκεν αύθις αυτώ τὸ

ι αποφοιτήσαν πολε θείου τε, κό άγιον ωνεύμα, μελαποιθν

" εδ μάλα σερός την ύπερκοσμιον είκονα, κ) σεφυκός κ) δυ-

" νάμενον διὰ τὸ πρὸς ἰδίαν ἡμᾶς μεθαβρυθμίζειν ἐμφερειαν."

SEAL WAS SECRETLY IMPRESSED ON HIS SOUL, WAS SEPARATED FROM HIM, and fo he became " corruptible and deformed, and every way vicious. But after that the Creator of the universe had de-" figned to restore to its pristine sirmness and beauty that " which was fallen into corruption, and was become adulterated and deformed by fin superinduced, he sent " again into it that divine and holy Spirit which was " withdrawn from it, and which hath a natural apti-" tude and power to change us into the celeftial image, " viz. by transforming us into his own likenefs. And " in the fourth book of the fame work, * When " the only begotten Son was made man, finding man's " nature bereft of its antient and primitive good, he " hastened to transform it again into the same state, out " of the fountain of his fulness, sending forth (the "Spirit), and Saying, RECEIVE THE HOLY " GHOST.

* " 'Οτέ γέγονεν ανθεοσω ὁ μονογενής, ἐφήμην τὰ πάλαι,
" κὰ ἐν ἀρχαῖς ἀγαθε τήν ἀνθρώπε Φυσιν εθρών, πάλιν αὐτὴν
" εἰς ἐκεῖνο μεθασοιχειθν ἀπειχείο, καθάπερ ἀπό πηγῆς του
" ἰδίν πληρώμαθω ἐνιεἰς τε κὰ λέγων λαβεθε πνεδμα ἀγιον."

5τ. Curi.

SECTION X.

The Opinions of Bishop Pearson and Doctor Scott, Author of the Christian Life, and an Advocate for natural Religion, against spiritual Pretensions.

Bishop Pearson is in the highest esteem as a divine. His book on the Creed is recommended by tutors, by Bishops' chaplains, and by Bishops, to young students in the course of their reading preparatory to holy orders. It has been most accurately examined and universally approved by the most eminent theologues of our church, as an orthodox exposition of the Christian Creed. Let us hear him on the subject of the Spiagr's evidence, which now engages our attention.

"As the increase and persection, so the origi"nal or initiation of faith is from the Spirit of
God, not only by an EXTERNAL PROPOSAL IN
"THE WORD, but by an INTERNAL ALLUMANA"TION in the soul, by which we are inclined to
"the obedience of faith, in affenting to those truths
"which unto a natural and carnal man are soolishness. And thus we affirm not only the revelation of the will of God, but also the illumina"tion of the soul of man, to be part of the office of
the Spirit of God*."

Dr. Scott, an orthodox divine, a zealous teacher of morality, celebrated for a book intitled the Christian Life, fays, "That without the Holy "Ghost we can do nothing; that he is the Au-

Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Art. 8.

" THOR AND FINISHER of our faith, who worketh " in us to will and to do his good pleasure. His " first office is the informing of our minds with the " light of heavenly truth. Thus the apostle prays " that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the " Father of Glory, would give unto them the " Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the know-" ledge of him, that THE EYES OF THEIR UNDER-" STANDINGS being enlightened, they might know " what is the hope of Christ's calling"; and we " are told, that it is by RECEIVING THE SPIRIT " of God, that we know the things that are freely " given us by Godt.

" Now this illumination of the Spirit is two-" fold: first, external, by that revelation which " he hath given us of God's mind and will in the " holy scripture, and that miraculous evidence by " which he fealed and attested it; for all scripture is given by inspiration of God ;; or, as it is else-" where expressed, was delivered by holy men, as they were moved by the Holy Ghoft &; and all those " miraculous testimonies we have to the truth and " divinity of scripture are from the Holy Ghost, " and, upon that account, are called the demon-" fration of the Spirit; fo that all the light we re-" ceive from scripture, and ALL the evidence we " have that that light is divine, we derive origi-" nally from the Holy Spirit.

"But besides this external illumination of the " Holy Spirit, there is also an INTERNAL one, "which confifts in impressing that external light " and evidence of scripture upon our under fland-

^{*} Ephes. i. 17, 18. † 1 Cor. ii. 12.

ings, whereby we are enabled more clearly to apprehend, and more effectually to believe it.

" For though the divine Spirit doth not (at " least in the ordinary course of his operation) " illuminate our minds with any new truths, or " new evidences of truth, but only prefents to " our minds those old and primitive truths and " evidences which he at first revealed and gave to " the world; yet there is no DOUBT but he fill " continues not only to suggest them both to our minds, but to urge and repeat them with that " importunity, and thereby to imprint them with " that clearness and efficacy, as that if we do not, " through a wicked prejudice against them, wil-" fully divert our minds from them to vain on " finful objects, we must unavoidably apprehend " them far more distinctly, and affent to them far " more cordially and effectually, than otherwife " we should or could have done; for our minds " are naturally fo vain and stupid, fo giddy, " liftless, and inadvertent, especially in spiri-" tual things, which are abstract from common " fense, as that did not the Holy Spirit frequently " present, importunately urge, and thereby fix " these on our minds, our knowledge of them would be so confused, and our belief so wavering " and unstable, as that they would never have " any preventing influence on our wills and " AFFECTIONS. So that our knowledge and " BELIEF of divine things, fo far as they are " faving and effectual to our renovation, are the " fruits and products of this INTERNAL ILLUMIthat are in truth the proper effects of that super-

^{*} Scott's Christian Life, part ii- chap. 7.

SECTION XI.

Opinion of Bishop Sanderson on the Impossibility of becoming a Christian without Supernatural Afficiance.

Tr was Simon Magus's error to think that the gift of God might be purchased with money; and it hath a spice of his sin, and so may go for a kind of simony, to think that spiritual gifts may be purchased with labour. You may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard, and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors, and when you have done all, unless God give a blessing unto your endeavours, be as thin and meagre in regard of true and useful learning, as Pharaoh's kine were after they had eaten the fat ones. It is God that both ministereth seed to the sower, and multiplies the seed sown; the principal and the increase are both his."

graces, though wrought immediately by us, and with the free consent of our own wills, are yet the fruit of God's Spirit working in us. That is to say, they do not proceed originally from any strength of nature, or any inherent power in man's free will; nor are they acquired by the culture of philosophy, the advantages of education, or any improvement whatsoever of natural abilities by the helps of art or industry:

but are in truth the proper effects of that super-

[&]quot; Genefie, zli. 21.

" natural grace which is given unto us by the good pleasure of God the Father, merited for us by the precious blood of God the Son, and conveyed unto our hearts by the sweet and fecret inspirations of God the Holy Ghost.

" Love, joy, and peace are fruits, not at all of the steff, but merely of the Spirit.

"All those very many passages in the New "Testament which either set forth the unframea-" bleness of our nature to the doing of any thing " that is good, (not that we are sufficient of our-4 selves to think a good thought; in me, that is in " my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing"; and the " like,) or else ascribe our best performances to " the glory of the grace of God, (without me you es can do nothing. All our sufficiency is of God. Not s of yourselves; it is the gift of God. It is God " that worketh in you both the will and deed; and " the like,) are so many clear confirmations of " the truth. Upon the evidence of which truth " it is that our mother the church hath taught us " in the public fervice to beg at the hands of " almighty God that he would endue us with the " grace of his Holy Spirit, to amend our lives accord-" ing to his holy word: and again, (confonantly to " the matter we are in hand with, almost in ter-" minis,) that he would give to all men increase of " grace to hear meekly his word, and to receive it with " pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the " Spirit. As without which grace it were not possible for us to amend our lives, or to bring " forth fuch fruits, according as God requireth " in his holy word.

^{* 2} Cor. iii. 5. Romans, vii. 18.

[†] John, xv. 7. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Eph. ii. 8. Phil. ii. 13.

[&]quot; And

"And the reason is clear: because as the tree is such must the fruit be. Do men look to gather grapes of thorns, or sigs of thistles*; Or can they expect from a salt fountain other than brackish water? Certainly, what is born of selfs the can be no better than stesh. Who can bring a clean thing out of that which is uncleant? Or how can any thing that good is proceed from a heart, all the imaginations of the thoughts whereof are only and continually evil;? If we would have the fruit good, reason will (and our Saviour prescribeth the same method) that order be taken, first to make the tree goods.

"But you will fay, it is impossible so to alter the nature of the sless to make it bring forth good spiritual fruit; as it is to alter the nature of a crab or thorn, so as to make it bring forth a pleasant apple. Truly, and so it is: if you shall endeavour to mend the fruit by altering the stock, you shall find the labour altogether fruitles;—a crab will be a crab still, when you have done what you can: and you may as well hope to wash an Ethiopian white, as to purge the sless from sinful pollution.

"The work therefore must be done quite another way: not by alteration, but ADDITION. That is, leaving the old principle to remain as it was, by superinducing ab extra a new principle, of a different and more kindly quality. We see the experiment of it daily in the grafting of trees; a crabstock, if it have a cion of some delicate apple artfully grafted in it; look what branches

^{*} Mat. vii. 16.

[†] Job, xiv. 4. § James, i. 21.

are fuffered to grow out of the stock itself, they " will all follow the nature of the flock, and if " they bring forth any fruit at all, it will be four " and stiptic. But the fruit that groweth from " the graft will be pleafant to the tafte, because " it followeth the nature of the graft. We read " of Lovos suguros, an engrafted word. Our carnal " hearts are the old flock; which, before the " word of God be grafted in it, cannot bring " forth any spiritual fruit acceptable to God: but " when, by the powerful operation of his Holy " Spirit, the word which we hear with our out-" ward ears is inwardly grafted therein, it then " bringeth forth the fruit of good living. So that " all the bad fruits that appear in our lives come " from the old stock, the flesh: and if there be " any good fruit of the Spirit in us, it is from " the virtue of that word of grace that is grafted " in us."

What modern philosopher or divine can rival this great prelate? His Pralectiones rank him with Aristotle; his piety, with the chief of the apostles.

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SECTION XII.

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Bishop Smalridge on the absolute Necessity of Grace.

"TIE who is not convinced of the absolute necessity of God's grace to invigorate his " obedience to the divine laws, must be a perfect " stranger to himself, as well as to the word of "God; and must have been as careless an observer " of what passes within his own breast, as of what " is written in the holy fcriptures. When one " gives himself leisure to take a survey of his own "faculties, and observe how dark-sighted he is in "the perception of divine truths; with what reluc-" tance he fometimes chuses what his understand-" ing plainly represents to him as good, and refuses " what his own conscience directly pronounces to "be evil; how apt his affections are to rebel " against the dictates of his reason, and to hurry "him another way than he knows he should, and " in his fober mind, very fain would go; when he " fets before his thoughts the great variety of "duties commanded, and of fins forbidden, and "the perverseness of his own depraved nature, " which gives him an antipathy to those duties " and a strong inclination to those sins; when he " reflects on the power and cunning of his spiri-"tual enemies, always alluring him to fin, and " feducing him from the practice of virtue; when " he weighs with himself the necessity of practifing "every duty, and forfaking every kind of wick-" edness, in order to secure a good title to the " promises of the gospel; when he takes a view of " those

" those particular obstacles which hinder him in " the exercise of several graces, and of the strong " temptations which prompt him to the commif-" fion of feveral fins; when he confiders the apt-" ness of human nature to grow weary of per-" forming the same things, though in themselves " never so pleasant, and its still greater disposition " to grow faint, when the actions continually to " be repeated are burdenfome to flesh and blood; "when he compares the necessity of perseverance " with the difficulty of it, the prevalence of things of present and sensible with the weakness wherewith " those objects affect us that are absent and spiri-" tual; when, I fay, a confidering man puts all " these things together, he cannot but be con-" vinced, that narrow is the path that leads unto " everlafting life, and that without ILLUMINATION " from the Spirit of God, he shall not be able " rightly to difcern it; that Brait is the gate " which opens an entry into heaven; and that he "cannot, by force of his own natural strength, " without new power given him from above, and " the secret influences of God's Holy Spirit, add-"ing force and energy to his own endeavours, " force his way through it. Confcious, therefore, " of his own weakness, he will acknowledge the " necessity of God's grace; and being ready to "fink through his own natural weight, unless " fupported by foreign help, he will cry out with " St. Peter, Save me, Lord, or ELSE I perift.

"Some philosophers of old flattered the pride and vanity of men, by teaching them that they wanted nothing to make them virtuous, but only a firm and steady resolution of being so; that this resolution they themselves were masters

"of, and might exert at their own pleasure. "They confidently boafted that their happiness " was a thing wholly in their own power; that "they need not ask of the gods to be virtuous, " nor consequently to be happy, since they could " be fo without their aid or concurrence, or even " in despite of them. The Pelagians afterwards " raised their heresies upon the principles which "these heathen philosophers had first broached; "they engaged in the quarrel of depraved nature "against divine grace: all our disorders they "would have to be the effects not of fin but of " nature; all our evil inclinations feemed to them capable of being subdued by our own unaffisted " reason; and they did not think the succour of " any fupernatural grace necessary either for the " combating of vice, or the maintenance of their " integrity and virtue. But the fober Christian "hath learned from the scriptures to speak and " to think more humbly of himself, and more " becomingly and magnificently of God; we are " there taught that we are not sufficient of ourselves " to think, much less to do, any thing as of ourselves, " but that our sufficiency is of God; that it is God, " which worketh within us both to will and to do of " his good pleasure; that it is by the Spirit we must "mortify the deeds of the body, if we would live; that it is God who, by his Spirit, makes us perse feet in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his fight. The hum. " ble and devout Christian being thus satisfied of "the necessity of God's grace, both from his own " experience and from the scriptures, and being " affured of the VITAL INFLUENCES of this spirit 45 from the promises made to him in the gospel, " will

" will not be over-curious to inquire into the " fecret and inconceivable manner of its operation. " He will choose rather to FEEL these influences, " than to understand or explain them, and will not " doubt of that power, which, though he cannot " give an account of as to the manner of its work-"ing, he plainly perceives to be great and marvel-" lous from its mighty and wonderful effects: for " when, in reading the holy scriptures, he finds " the veil of darkness removed from before his UNDER-" STANDING; when clouds of ignorance that had " overcast his mind, are presently dispersed; when " the doubts under which he had for some time " laboured are on a fudden cleared; when fuch " pious thoughts as were wont to pass transiently " are long dwelt upon, fo as to leave behind them "deep and lasting impressions; when these are " fuggested to him without his feeking, and are " urged and pressed upon him so importunately, "that he cannot choose but listen unto them; "when, from a calm and ferious confideration " of the state of his own foul, the odiousness and "danger of fin, the beauty and necessity of holi-" nefs, he is led to make good and pious refolutions " of ferving God with greater purity for the time "to come; when he finds a sudden impulse upon " his spirits, rouzing him up to the performance " of fome important duty which he had before "neglected; or an unexpected check, stopping " him in the midst of his course, when he is rush-" ing on blindly and impetuoufly to the commission " of some heinous sin; when in his devotions he " finds his attention fixed, his affections inflamed, and " his heart melted within him; when, while the " voice of God's minister preaching the faving " truths

"truths of the gospel sounds in his ears, he is fensible of an inward voice speaking with greater force and esticacy to his soul, to his understanding, and to his heart; when, under the pressure of any grievous assistiction, he seels unexpected joy and comfort; when light rises up in the midst of darkness; when there is given much him beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; upon all these and the like occasions he is sense fible of the presence and aid of God's Holy Spirit, whose grace alone is sufficient to all these purposes, and whose strength is thus made perfect in his weakness.

"How the operation of God's Holy Spirit is s confistent with the freedom of our own wills; " how far we are passive and how far active in those " good thoughts, words, and works, which are " wrought in us by the influence of this Holy "Spirit, the practical Christian doth not much " trouble himself to inquire. Whatsoever is good " in him, that he devoutly afcribes not unto him-" felf, but unto the grace of God which was " afforded him; O Lord, not unto me, but unto thy " name be the glory; or having by his former fins " justly merited to be left destitute and forfaken; " in the latter case he is ready to make Daniel's " humble acknowledgment; O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto me confusion of face. " He will leave it to others to dispute about the " nature, extent, and efficacy of this grace, and " will make it his own chief labour to obtain, to "cherish, and to improve it; he strives, accord-"ing to the best of his judgment, to form right " notions of its efficaey, but he is still more foli-" citous

citous that no mistakes in his opinions about it may have any dangerous influences upon his oractice. He cannot be very wrong in his no-" rions, whilst he believes that man's will is neither of fo free, as without God's grace to do good, " nor fo enflaved, as not to be at liberty e either to concur with or to relift that grace; "but whether these notions about a matter so "intricate be exactly right or not, he is fully st affured that he cannot be mistaken in his mea-" fures of acting, if he exerts his own endeavours with as much vigour and earnestness, as if by " them alone he were finally to fland or fall; and, " at the same time, implores God's grace with as " much fervency, as if that alone could support " him: if he neither relies fo far on his own " ftrength, as not humbly to acknowledge that it is God alone who works in him both to will and to do, " nor fo far depends on the grace of God to fave "him, as to forget that he is required to work "out his own falvation-if lastly, at his ap-" proaches to the holy altar, he doth prepare him-" felf for the reception of the bleffed facrament, " with as much care, diligence, and scrupulosity, as " if the benefits he there expects did entirely " depend upon the disposition he brings along with " him, and his own fitness to communicate, and " yet at the same time, not trusting on his own " imperfect righteousness, but on God's infinite " mercy, he doth there, with faith, with humility, " with reverence, address himself to that blessed " Spirit, who is the giver of every good and perfect " gift, that he may be fulfilled with his grace and " heavenly benediction "

I cannot but hope that these opinions of a classical scholar, a man adorned with all clegant and polite learning, as well as with philosophy; a man, whose habits of life and social connexions tended to remove him from all contagion of enthusiasm, will have great weight with the elegant and polite part of the world, in recommending the neglected or exploded doctrine of grace. No man needs blush to entertain the religious sentiments of Bishop Smalridge; nor can folly or fanaticism be reasonably imputed to divines like him, whose minds were enriched with all the stores of science, and polished with all the graces of ornamental literature,

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SECTION XIII.

Human Learning highly useful, and to be pursued with all Diligence, but cannot, of itself, furnish evidences of Christianity completely satisfactory, like those which the Heart of the good Christian feels from the divine Influence: with the Opinion of Doctor Isaac Watts.

Learning should be the handmaid of religion. She must not take upon her the office of a judge or arbitress. Her employment is highly honourable and useful, though subordinate. Let learning be cultivated, and continue to flourish and abound. Religion is the sun to the soul; the source of light and the cherisher of life. But because there is a sun, must there be no inferior lights? God has made the moon and the stars also, and pronounced that they are good.

Never let the enemies to Christianity triumph over it, by afferting that it is an enemy to learning, and tends to introduce the ignorance of barbarism. Learning, under due regulations, contributes to soften the mind, and prepare it for the divine agency. A learned, virtuous, and religious man, whose religion is VITAL and truly Christian, is a superior being, even in this mortal state, and may be imagined, by us his fellow creatures, to be little lower than the angels.

Nobody can hold learning, and the inventions of human ingenuity, in higher esteem than my-felf; I look up to them with affection, and admiration. But after all, and however perfect and beautiful

beautiful they may be, they are but HUMAN, the product of poor, short-lived, fallible mortals Whatever comes from the FATHER OF LIGHTS, from him who made that MIND which is capable of learning and science, must deserve more attention and honour than can possibly be due to the most beautiful and stupendous works of human ingenuity. These are not to be slighted, but beloved, pursued, rewarded. But I am a MORTAL. Every moment is bringing me nearer to that period when the curtain shall fall, and all these things be hidden from my eyes. My first attention and warmest affection therefore ought to be fixed on things spiritual and eternal.

All arts, all sciences, must be secondary and instrumental to the attainment of DIVINE ILLUMINATION. I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, says
Jesus Christ. Can any reasonable man rest satisfied
without coming to the light after such a declaration? Will he be contented with the radiance of
dim lights and salfe lights, when he is invited to
approach the brilliant and the true?

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Learning is necessary for the purposes of this life; it is an ornament and a defence. It is highly useful in religious investigation. It furnishes arguments to enforce morality, to persuade to all that is good and great, and to deter from folly and vice. But let it ever keep to its own office, which is certainly, in religious matters, ministerial. It can amuse; it can inform; but it cannot supply the summum bonum, it cannot raise fallen man to his original state. Grace only can restore man to God's image. If learning could have done it, why were the heathens unrestored? are not the insidels often learned? and would not the advent

advent of our Lord and Saviour have been superfluous, if learning could have repaired the ruins of the fall?

Few (as I have already faid) in the mass of mankind are learned. They are perhaps as one to a million. What is to become of the millions then, if the gospel of Jesus Christ, by which alone they can live in the fweet tranquillity of a state of grace, and die with religious hope and confidence, cannot be received, with sufficient evidence, without deep learning, logical and metaphysical disputation? What is to prove it to them, who have neither books, leifure, or ability to study, if God himself do not teach them by his SPIRIT? Bleffed be his name, he has taught them, and continues to teach them. It is among the learned chiefly that INFI-DELITY prevails. She inhabits libraries, and walks abroad in academic groves, but is rarely feen in the cottage, in the field, or in the manufactory. The poor and the unlearned do in general believe in the gospel most firmly. What is the evidence which convinces them? It is the witness of the Spirit; and thanks be to him who faid my grace is sufficient for thee. " He that believeth on the Son " of God hath this witness in himself."

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The opinion of a man like Dr. Isaac Watts on the true nature of Christianity, is almost of itself decisive. He was not only a devout and zealous Christian, but a profound scholar, a natural philosopher, a logician, and a metaphysician. His life and conversation exhibited a pattern of every Christian virtue. Let us hear him.

"Every true Christian," says he, "has a suffi-"cient argument and EVIDENCE to support his faith, without being able to prove the authority " of any of the canonical writings. He may hold fast his religion, and be assured that it is divine, though he cannot bring any learned proof that the book that contains it is divine too; nay, though the book itself should even happen to be for destroyed: and this will appear, with open and easy conviction, by asking a few such questions as these:

"Was not this same gospel preached with glo"rious success before the New Testament was
"written?

"Were not the same doctrines of salvation by

Jesus Christ published to the world by the

ministry of the apostles, and made effectual to

convert thousands, before they set themselves to

commit these doctrines to writing?

"And had not every fincere believer, every true convert, this bleffed witness in himself, that Christianity was from God?

"Eight or ten years had passed away, after the ascension of Christ, before any part of the New Testament was written; and what multitudes of Christian converts were born again by the preaching of the word, and raised to a divine and heavenly life, long ere this book was half finished or known, and that among the heathens as well as Jews. Great numbers of the Gentile world became holy believers, each of them having the epistle of Christ written in the heart, and bearing about within them a noble and convincing proof that this religion was divine; and that without a written gospel, without epistles, and without a Bible.

"In the first ages of Christianity, for several hundred years together, how sew among the common

"common people were able to read? How few could get the possession or the use of a Bible, when all facred as well as profane books were of necessity copied by writing? How few of the populace, in any large town or city, could obtain or could use any small part of scripture, before the art of printing made the word of God fo common? And yet millions of these were regenerated, sanctified, and saved by the mi-

"Be convinced then that Christianity has a "more noble inward witness belonging to it than "is derived from ink and paper, from precise "letters and fyllables. And though God, in his " great wisdom and goodness, saw it necessary that "the New Testament should be written, to pre-" ferve these holy doerines uncorrupted through "all ages, and though he has been pleafed to be " the invariable and authentic rule of our faith " and practice, and made it a glorious instrument " of instructing ministers and leading men to sal-"vation in all these latter times; yet Christianity "has a fecret witness in the hearts of believers, that " does not depend on their knowledge and proof of the " authority of the scriptures, nor of any of the con-"troversies that in latter ages have attended the " feveral manuscript copies and different readings " and translations of the Bible.

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"Now this is of admirable use and importance in the Christian life, upon several accounts. First, if we consider how sew poor unlearned Christians there are who are capable of taking in the arguments which are necessary to prove the divine authority of the sacred writings; and how sew, even among the learned, can well adjust

"adjust and determine many of the different readings or different translations of particular passinges in scripture. Now a wise Christian does
hot build his faith or hope merely upon any one
or two single texts, but upon the GENERAL
scope, sum and substance of the gospel. By
this he feels a spiritual life of peace and piety
begun in him. And here lies his evidence that
Christianity is divine, and that these doctrines are from heaven, though a text or two
may be falsely written or wrong translated, and
though a whole book or two may be hard to be
proved authentic.

"The learned well know what need there is of "turning over the histories of ancient times, of "the traditions and writings of the fathers, and " all authors pious and profane; what need of "critical skill in the holy languages and in ancient " manuscripts; what a wide survey of various cir-" cumftances of fact, time, place, style, diction " is necessary to confirm one or another book or " verse of the New Testament, and to answer the "doubts of the fcrupulous, and the bold objec-"tions of the infidel. Now how few of the com-" mon rank of Christians, whose hearts are inlaid " with true faith in the Son of God, and with real " holiness, have leifure, books, instruction, advan-" tages, and judgment sufficient to make a thorough " fearch into these matters, and to determine. " upon a just view of argument, that these books "were written by the facred authors whose names " they bear, and that these authors were under an " immediate inspiration in writing them. What "a glorious advantage is it then to have such an "INFALLIBLE TESTIMONY to the truth of the " gostel

" gospel wrought and written in the heart by renewing grace, as does not depend on this laborious, learned, and ARGUMENTATIVE EVIDENCE
of the divine authority of the Bible, or of any
particular book or verse in it!

"Secondly, if we confider what bold affaults of are fometimes made upon the faith of the un-" learned Christian by the deists and unbelievers " of our age, by disputing against the authority of " the fcripture, by ridiculing the strange narra-"tives and fublime doctrines of the Bible, by fet-" ting the feeming contradictions in a blasphemous "light, and then demanding, "How can you " prize or how can you believe that this book is "the word of God, or that the religion it teaches "is divine?" In such an hour of contest, how " happy is the Christian that can fay, " Though "I am not able to folve all the difficulties in the "Bible, nor maintain the facred authority of it " against the cavils of wit and learning, yet I am " well assured that the doctrines of this book are " facred, and the authority of them divine; for " when I heard and received them, they changed " my nature, they subdued my finful appétites, "they made a new creature of me, and raifed me " from death to life; they made me LOVE GOD " above all things, and gave me the lively and "well-grounded hope of his love. Therefore I " cannot doubt but that the CHIEF PRINCIPLES " of this book are divine, though I cannot so well " prove that the very words and fyllables of it are " fo too; for it is the fense of scripture, and not " the mere letters of it, on which I build my " hope. What if the scripture should not be " divine ?

"divine? What if this gospel and the other episseles should not be written by inspiration? What if these should be merely the words of men, and not the very word of God?—Though I cannot recollect all the arguments that prove Matthew, Mark, and Luke to be divine historians, or Peter and Paul to be inspired writers; yet the substance and chief sense of these gospels and their epistles must needs be divine; for IT has fegun the spiritual and eternal life in my soul; and this is my witness, or rather the witness of the Spirit of God within us, that Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, and the religion that I profess and practise is safe and divine."

"And though there are many and fufficient "arguments drawn from criticism, history, and " human learning to prove the facred authority of "the Bible, and fuch as may give abundant fatis-" faction to an honest inquirer, and full satisfac-"tion that it is the word of God; yet THIS IS "THE CHIEF EVIDENCE that the greatest part of " Christians can ever attain of the divine original " of the holy scripture itself, as well as the truth " of the doctrines contained in it, namely, That " they have found a hely and heavenly CHANGE passed " upon them, by reading and hearing the propo-" fitions, the histories, the precepts, the promises, " and the threatenings of this book; and thence "they are wont to infer, that the God of truth " would not attend a book, which was not agreea-" ble to his mind, with fuch glorious instances of " his own power and grace.

"I have dwelt the longer on shewing that the " inward witness is such a witness to the truth of " the Christian religion as does not depend on the es exact truth of letters and syllables, nor on the cri-" tical knowledge of the copies of the Bible, nor " on this old manuscript or the other new transla-"tion, because every manuscript and every tran-" flation has enough of the gofpel to fave fouls by " it, and make a man a Christian; and because I " think this point of great importance in our age, "which has taken fo many steps to heathenism "and infidelity; for this argument or EVIDENCE " will defend a Christian in the profession of the " true religion, though he may not have skill " enough to defend his Bible.

"Why do you believe in Jesus?" asks the un-" believer. If you have this answer ready at " hand, " I HAVE FOUND THE EFFICACY AND " POWER OF THE GOSPEL IN MY HEART;" this

" will be fufficient to answer every cavil.

"The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians " have a reference to our present subject. Ye are " manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ minif-" tered by us; written, not with INK but with the " SPIRIT OF THE LIVING, GOD; not in tables of " stone, but in sleshly tables of the heart "."

Thus far Dr. Watts, in his fermons on the inward Witness to Christianity, where the reader will find a great deal of truly evangelical instruction. For my own part, I cannot but think this good man approached as nearly to Christian perfection as any mortal ever did in this fublunary state; and

2 Cor. iii. 2, 3.

therefore

therefore I confider him as a better interpreter of the Christian doctrines than the most learned critics, who, proud of their reason and their learning, despised or neglected the very life and soul of Christianity, the living everlasting gospel, the supernatural operation of divine grace. And be it ever remembered, that Dr. Watts was a man who cultivated his reason with particular care, who studied the abstrusest sciences, and was as well qualified to become a verbal critic, or a logical disputant on the scriptures, as the most learned among the doctors of the Sorbonne, or the greatest proficients in polemical divinity.

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SECTION XIV.

The Opinion of Dr. Lucas, the celebrated Author of a Treatife on HAPPINESS, concerning the Evidence of Christianity arising from divine Communication.

of acquired learning in order to true illumination. Our Saviour did not exact of his
disciples, as a necessary preparation for his doctrine, the knowledge of tongues, the history of
times or of nature; logic, metaphysics, or the
like. These indeed may be serviceable to many
excellent ends: they may be great accomp lishments of the mind, great ornaments, and very
engaging ententainments of life. They may be,
finally, very excellent and necessary instruments
of, or introductions to several professions and
employments; but as to religious perfection and
happiness, to these they can never be indispenfably necessary.

"A man may be excellently, habitually GOOD, "without more languages than one; he may be "fully perfuaded of those great truths, that will "render him master of his passions and independent of the world; that will render him easy "and useful in this life, and glorious in another,

"though he be no logician nor metaphysician.

"The qualifications previously necessary to

"illumination are two or three MORAL ONES, im
"plied in that INFANT temper which our Saviour

"required in those who would be his disciples;—

"humility, impartiality, and a thirst and love of

"tru th."

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"There is a knowledge, which, like the fum-"mit of Pisgah where Moses stood, shews us the "land of Canaan, but does not bring us into it.

"How does the power of darkness, at this "moment, prevail amidst the light of the gospel? "Are men ignorant? No: but their knowledge is "not such as it ought to be; it is not the light of "life.

"The understanding does not always determine the will.

"Though every honest man be not able to dis"cover all the arguments on which his creed
"stands, he yet may discover enough; and what
"is more, he may have an inward, vital, sen"sible proof of them; he may feel the power,
"the charms of holiness, experience its congruity
"and loveliness to the human soul, so as that he
"shall have no doubts or scruples. But besides
"this, there is a voice within, a divine Teacher
"and Instructor.

"Extraordinary natural parts are not necessary
to illumination. The gospel takes no notice of
them. Such is the beauty of holiness, that it
requires rather a fine sensibility arising from
purity of heart, than quickness of intellectual
apprehension, to render us enamoured of it."

A truth which involves the present and eternal happiness of human beings, cannot be placed in too great a variety of lights, or too repeatedly enforced. "He that soweth to the Spirit," says St. Paul, "shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting*." When such is the harvest, every benevolent mind must wish to urge mankind, in this

^{*} Galatians, vi. 8.

their feed-time, to fow to the Spirit. What is fo important cannot be inculcated by too frequent repetition. I therefore quote authors which occur to me in the course of my reslections on the subject, whose opinions, though similar, may add weight to doctrines already advanced. Such is the above from Dr. Lucas, a most excellent divine, never charged with the least tendency to blameable enthusiasm.

I wish my reader to pay particular attention to what he suggests on the infant temper, required by our Lord in his followers. "Except," says Jesus Christ, "ye be converted, and become as "little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God*."—"Verily I say unto you, Whoso-"ever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a "LITTLE CHILD, he shall not enter therein†."

The amiable dispositions of infants must therefore be produced in the heart, before the religion of Christ can be received into it. But are such dispositions best sproduced, or can they be produced at all, by subtle disputations, by cold argumentation, by bringing forward objections in order to display ingenuity in answers, laboured indeed and sagacious, but, after all, unsatisfactory to many, and unintelligible to more?

Yet this mode of recommending Christianity is the only one approved by some persons of high authority; and there are those who would not venture to preach the doctrine of grace, the teaching of God and a spiritual understanding, less they should be numbered with enthusiasts, and lose all chance of promotion and worldly esteem. This danger must be voluntarily incurred by all who

^{*} Mat. xviii. 3.

would fucceed in repelling the rapid advances of modern infidelity. Christianity flourished wonderfully while its genuine doctrines, the glad tidings of grace, were preached; and it has been gradually declining, ever fince it has become fafhionable, in order to discountenance fanaticism, to recommend mere heathen morality as the effence of Christianity, and to make use of no other arguments to prove the truth of it, but fuch as an ingenious man, without the fmallest particle of religion in his heart, might produce. Professional advocates, furnished with human arguments only and external evidence, appear to the true Christian, as well as to the unbeliever, like lawyers pleading for a fee, on that fide of the question which they know to be wrong, or at least are not convinced is right. It is indeed certain that a dull and plodding fcholar may make a wonderful display of erudition in defence of Christianity, without feeling a lively fense of it himself, or communicating it to his readers. His materials supply the adversaries with arms for fresh attacks, and at the same time fail in building an impregnable rampart round the citadel which he undertakes to defend. There is usually some weak place at which the enemy enters; and, having once entered, he takes poffeffion of the fortress, and uses the stores and ammunition against the very persons who collected them with fo much labour.

Nothing of this kind can happen when recourse is had to the teaching of the Spirit. It overcomes the heart; it brings it to the lovely state of infantine innocence and simplicity; and renders him who, like St. Paul was a persecutor of it, a warm friend and advocate. It is certain that the argumentative mode of addressing unbelievers, and a reliance on external evidence, has hitherto failed. Many of the most learned and able men of modern times, who were capable of understanding the historical, logical, and metaphysical defences of Christianity, have read them without conviction, and laughed at their laborious imbecility.

It is time to try another mode: And all who are fincere Christians will favour the experiment; for they would rather see men converted to the true religion, though they should become fervent, and zealous even to a degree of harmless enthusiasm, than totally alienated from it, and enlisted under the partizans of insidelity.

If men of the world and men of learning* will not interpose to prevent the divine energy, we shall see it produce its genuine effects in all their vigour and maturity, as well in the world of grace as of nature. A secret operation gives life and growth to the tree, and so will it to the human soul. "I am the vine, ye are the branches," says

our Saviour: the branches will foon wither and decay, if the fap flows not to them from the vine.

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SECTION XV.

Passages from a well-known Book of an anonymous Author, intitled Inward Testimony.

REAL Christians find, as soon as they apply themselves to know what is comprehensible, in the facred scriptures, and to a sincere endeavour to do what is prasticable, so soon a faith in its incomprehensible doctrines is produced, and then is sulfilled, that he that doth the will of

God Skall know of the doctrines whether they be of God.

"The DIVINE SPIRIT concurs with the outward revelation in changing a man's fceptical disposition, and then he is fixed: otherwise he would be as ready as ever to embrace the first plausible

" argument against the gospel. "We have fome, who, by their mere notional " knowledge of revelation, the outward testimony to "Christianity, disbelieve the reality or necessity " of any acquaintance with the inward testimony, by "which the DIVINE SPIRIT produces a ferious " fpiritual frame, fitting the foul to receive the fanctifying impressions of an outward revelation. "They think that reading of facred fcripture, " and forming from thence right notions of Chrif-" tianity, in order to TALK of it, with a going the " round of common duties, and a not being guilty " of common fins, is the whole of the Christian re-" ligion, and all the meetness that is necessary for " heaven. A ferious HEAVENLY FRAME, fuitable " to the true notion of revelation, has no place in

"them;

"them; they ridicule it in others, and name it affectation, rather than any real part of CHRIS-

"An ingenious mind may argue for God against the arheist; for Christ against the Socinian; and for the outward testimony of the Spirit of Christ against the Deist; and he himself be no real Christian: but no person can well display this inward testimony of Christ in the soul, without the Experience of it*."

* Jam hic videte magnum facramentum, Fratres. Magifteria forinfecus adjutoria quædam funt et admonitiones; CATHEDRAM IN COLO BABET QUI CORDA DOCET.

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SECTION XVI.

Dr. Townson's Opinions on the Evidence which is in this Book recommended as superior to all other.

"If the word was enforced by miracles in the times only of its early publication, it has the flanding support and evidence of another power, which is still as operative, where we will allow it, as ever. This is declared and promised in the following passage: Jesus answered them and faid, My dostrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the dostrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

"The person who enters on the study of a " science, of which he has only a general idea, " must receive many things at first on the authority " of his instructors. And surely there is no one, " who, by his life and works, has fuch claim to " trust and confidence in his words as the Author " and Finisher of our faith. If then we really " defire to know the certainty of his doctrine; if " we have the courage to facrifice meaner pursuits "to the wisdom that is from above, and the feli-" city of attaining it; we shall study the truth of his " religion as he directs, by the PRACTICE OF ITS "LAWS. And this method, he assures us, will " yield us the repose and comfort of firm persuasion. "Continuing stedfast in such a course of disciof pline, we shall not seek after signs from heaven, " nor ask to behold the blind receive their fight, "the lame walk, the deaf hear, or the dead raised 46 up.

"up. The healing efficacy and bleffed influence of the gospel will sufficiently vouch for its truth and excellence.

"The EVIDENCE which thus possesses the soul is not liable to be impaired by time, as might an impression once made on the senses; but will shine more and more unto a perfect day. For the practice of religion, by purifying the heart, will raise and improve the understanding to conceive more clearly and judge more rightly of heavenly things and divine truths: the view and contemplation of which will return upon the heart the warmth of livelier hopes and more vigorous incitements to obedience; and effectual obedience will seel and testify that it is the finger of God.

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- " For is nature able, by its own efficiency, to " clear the eyes of the mind; to rectify the will; "to regulate the affections; to raise the soul to "its noblest object, in love and adoration of God; " to employ it steadily in its best and happiest ex-" ercise, justice and charity to man; to detach its " defires from the pleasures, profits, and honours " of the world; to exalt its views to heavenly "things; to render the whole life godly, just, and " fober? He, who impartially examines his own " moral abilities by the pure and fearthing light of " the gospel, must discern their defects and weak-" ness in every part; and when he well considers " the tenor and spirit of this gospel, must acknow-" ledge that he is not of himfelf fufficient for the " attainments to which it calls, and conducts its-" faithful votary.

"What then is it that hath taken him by the hand, and leads him on in this rifing path of virtue

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"and holiness; that prevents his steps from sliding;
"or if his foot hath slipped, raises him again;
"that keeps him steady in the right way; or, if
"at any time he hath wandered out of it, recals
"him to it; that strengthens him to resist temp"tations, or endure toils, and so continue patiently
"in well doing; that, as he advances, opens to
"his faith a still brightening view of the heavenly
"Jerusalem, through the gloom which our earthly
"state hangs upon death and suturity; and ani"mates him to live and walk by his faith?

"If these are exertions beyond the sphere of " mere human activity, the question, whence such "improvement of foul and life proceeds, will ad-"mit of an easy and clear answer. It is God who " blesses our earnest petitions that we may do his will, and our fincere endeavours to do it; with " the GRACE OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT; who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleafure; " and thus verifies and fulfils the promifes, made "by Christ to those who ask in his name, of suc-" cour and strength from on high. Christ there-" fore is his beloved Son, by whom we are redeem-" ed, and in whom we are accepted. The religion which he hath taught us, fo worthy of God in " theory, and fo favoured by him in the practice " of its laws, proves its heavenly origin by the fruit " it produces; and brings its divinity home to the " breast of the devout professor by EXPERIENCE of " its power unto falvation.

"It is natural to conclude, that he who has this conviction of its certainty will be desirous of persuading others to the belief and practice of it; and will be of an apt and sit disposition to in"ftruct them in it."

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There are scarcely any recent divines, whose opinions ought to have more weight than those of Dr. Townson. He lived, as he wrote, according to the true gospel. He is universally esteemed by the most learned and judicious theologists of the present day; and his opinions alone carry with them fufficient authority to justify me fully in recommending that evidence of the gospel truth which arises from divine influence, consequent on obedience to its precepts. An orthodox life, I am convinced, is the best preparative to the entertainment of orthodox opinions; and I rejoice to find fuch men as Townson enforcing the doctrine, " that if any man will do the will of Christ, he " shall know of the doctrine whether it be of "God." He does not refer us to systematical or philosophical works, but to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, for the attainment of this knowledge; a knowledge, compared to which all other is to man, condemned as he is shortly to die, but puerile amusement, a house of cards, a bubble blown up into the air, and displaying deceitful colours in a momentary funshine.

Vide Viduoleta ta to

SECTION XVII.

Dr. Doddridge on the Doctrine of Divine Influence.

NY degree of divine influence on the mind, " A inclining it to believe in Christ and to prac-" tife virtue, is called GRACE. All those who do " indeed believe in Christ, and in the main prac-" tife virtue, are to ascribe it not merely or chiefly " to their own wisdom and goodness, but to the " fpecial operation of divine grace upon their " fouls, as the original cause of it. None can "deny, that God has fuch an access to the minds " of men that he can work upon them in what si manner he pleases: and there is great reason to "believe, that his fecret influence on the mind si gives a turn to many of the most important " events relating to particular persons and socie-"ties", as it is evident many of the public revo-"lutions, mentioned in the Old Testament, are " ascribed to this causet. Though the mind of " man be not invincibly determined by motives, " yet in matters of great importance it is not de-" termined without them: and it is reasonable to " believe, that where a person goes through those "difficulties which attend faith and obedience, he " must have a very lively view of the great engage-"ments to them, and probably, upon the whole, " a more lively view than another, who, in the " fame

^{*} Prov. xxi. I.

[†] Ezra, i. I. Religion of Nature delineated, p. 105-107.

" fame circumstances, in all other respects acts in a different manner. Whatever instruments are " made use of as the means of making such pow-" erful impressions on the mind, the efficacy of " them is to be ascribed to the continual agency of the first cause. The prevalence of virtue and " piety in the church is to be afcribed to God, as " the great original Author, even upon the prin-" ciples of natural religion. Good men in scripture, " who appear best to have understood the nature of "God, and his conduct towards men, and who " wrote under the influence and inspiration of his " Spirit, frequently offer up fuch petitions to "God, as shew that they believed the reality and importance of his gracious agency upon the " heart to promote piety and virtue*. God promises to produce such a change in the hearts of " those to whom the other valuable bleffings of his " word are promised, as plainly implies that the " alteration made in their temper and character is " to be looked upon as his work+.

"The scripture expressly declares, in many places, that the work of faith in the soul is to be ascribed to God, and describes the change made in a man's heart, when it becomes truly religious, in such language as must lead the mind to some strength superior to our own by which

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^{*} Pfal li. 10 -- 12. xxxix. 4. xc. 12. cxix. 12. 18. 27. 33—37. 73. 80. 133. 1 Chron. xxix. 18. 19. Eph. i. 16, &c. Col. i. 9--- 11, &c. sim.

[†] Deut. xxx. 6. Pfal. cx. 3. Jer. xxxi, 33. xxxii. 39, 40. Ezek. xi. 19, 20. xxxvi. 26, 27. Compare Heb. viii. 8-13.

"which it is effected*. The inercase of Christians in faith and piety, is spoken of as the work of God; which must more strongly imply that the first beginnings of it are to be ascribed to him. The scripture does expressly affert the absolute necessity of such divine instuences on the mind, norder to faith and holiness, and speaks of God's giving them to one while he with-holds them from another, as the great reason of the difference to be found in the characters of different men in this important respect.

"It appears probable from the light of nature, and certain from the word of God, that FAITH and repentance are ultimately to be ascribed to the work of special grace upon the hearts of mens. As to the manner in which divine grace operates

John, i. 13. iii. 3. 5, 6. Acts, xi. 18: xvi. 14. 2 Coriii. 3, Eph. i. 19, 20. ii. 1. 10. iv. 24. Phil. i. 29. Col. i. 11. 12. ii. 12, 13. Vid. James, i. 18. 2 Tim. ii. 25. To this catalogue we feruple not to add Eph. ii. 8. though some have objected that relo cannot refer to wisews; since the like change of genders is often to be found in the New Testament; compare Acts, xxiv. 16. xxvi. 17. Phil. i. 28. I John ii. 8. Gal. iii. 16. iv. 19. Matth. vi. ult. xxviii. 19. Rom. ii. 24. Elsner's Observ. vol. i. p. 128. Raphel. Observ. ex Herod. in Matth. xxviii. 19. Glassii Op. 1. iii. Tract. ii. de pr. Can. xvi. p. 524—526.

† Pfal, exix. 32. Phil. i. 6. ii. 13. 1 Cor. vii. 25. iii, 7. iv. 7. xv. 10. 2 Cor. v. 5. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. 1 Pet. v. 10. Jude, ver. 24, 25.

† Deut xxix. 4. Matth. xi. c5, 26. John, vi. 44, 45, 46. xii. 39, 40. Rom. ix. 18.—23.

§ Lime-street Lect. vol. ii. p. 242-245. Tillotsen's Works, vol. ii. p. 80, 81. Limb. Theol. l. iv. c. 14. § 4. 21. Brandt's Hist of the Ref. vol. ii. p. 75. Doddridge on Regen. Serm. vii. p. 221-233. Jortin's Six Differtations, No. 1. Warburton's

operates upon the mind, confidering how little "it is we know of the nature and constitution of " our own fouls, and of the frame of nature " around us, it is no wonder that it should be un-" accountable to us *. Perhaps it may often be, by impelling the animal spirits or nerves, in " fuch a manner as is proper to excite certain ideas " in the mind with a degree of vivacity, which "they would not otherwise have had: by this " means various passions are excited; but the great " motives addressed to gratitude and love seem generally, if not always, to operate more power-" fully than any other, which many divines have "therefore chosen to express by the phrase of " delectatio victrixt." , sierelles les arriel pois, l'arre for l'

Warburton's Poctrine of Grace. Fost. Sermons, vol. ii. No. 5. præf. p. 104, 105.

* John, iii. 8.

† Compare Deut. xxx. 6. Pfal. cxix. 16. 20. 32. 47, 48. 97. 103. Pfal. xix. 10, 11. Rom. vii. 22. 1 John, iv. 18, 19. Rom. v. 5. Le Blanc's Thef. p. 527, § 53. Burn. Life of Roch. p. 43-51. Barclay's Apol. p. 148. Burnet on Art, p. 420. Whithy Comment. vol. ii. p. 289, 290. Scougal's Works, p. 6-10. Seed's Serm. vol. i. p. 291. Ridley on the Spirit, p. 210. King's Origin of Evil, p. 71. 376-380, fourth edition.

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SECTION XVIII.

The Opinion of Soame Jenyns on the fundamental Principles of Christianity.

"Ir Christianity is to be learned out of the New Testament, and words have any meaning

" affixed to them, the fundamental principles of it

" are thefe:

"That mankind came into this world in a deor praved and fallen condition; that they are placed " here for a while, to give them an opportunity " to work out their falvation; that is, by a virtuous and pious life to purge off that guilt and " depravity, and recover their loft state of happi-" ness and innocence in a future life; that this they " are unable to perform without the GRACE AND " ASSISTANCE OF God; and that, after their " best endeavours, they cannot hope for pardon " from their own merits, but only from the merits " of Christ, and the atonement made for their " transgressions by his sufferings and death. " is clearly the fum and substance of the Christian "dispensation; and so adverse is it to all the prin-" ciples of human reason, that if brought before " her tribunal, it must inevitably be condemned "If we give no credit to its divine authority, any attempt to reconcile them is ufeless, and, if we believe it, presumptuous in the highest degree. "To prove the REASONABLENESS of a revelation. " is in fact to destroy it; because a revelation imof plies information of fomething which reason 44 cannot

ec cannot discover, and therefore must be different " from its deductions, or it would be no reve-" lation."

The opinion of a professed wit and man of fashion may have weight with those who are prejudiced against professional divines. It has been doubted by many whether Mr. Jenyns was a fincere Christian. I am inclined to believe that he was fincere. As, in recommending Christianity, it is right to become all things to all men, that we may fave fome, his testimony is admitted in this place, though his lively manner of writing throws an air of levity on subjects, which, from their important nature, must always be considered as grave by all the partakers of mortality, who think juftly and feel acutely.

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SECTION XIX.

The Opinion of Bishop Horsley on the prevalent Neglest of teaching the peculiar Doctrines of Christianity, under the Idea that Moral Duties constitute the Whole or the better Part of it. Among the peculiar Dostrines is evidently included that of Grace, which the Methodists inculcate, (as the Bishop intimates,) not erroneously.

BISHOP Horsley has proved himself a mathematician and philosopher of the first rank, as well as a divine. All his works display singular vigour of intellect. He cannot be suspected of weak superstition or wild fanaticism. To the honour of Christianity, the editor of Newton, as well as Newton himself, is a firm supporter of its most mysterious doctrines. I desire the reader to weigh well the words of this able divine, as they were delivered in a charge to his clergy.

"A maxim has been introduced;" fays he, that the laity, the more illiterate especially, have

" little concern with the mysteries of revealed reli-

es gion, provided they be attentive to its duties;

"whence it hath feemed a fafe and certain conclu-

of fion, that it is more the office of a Christian

teacher to press the practice of religion upon the

consciences of his hearers, than to inculcate and

" infert its doctrines.

"Again, a dread of the pernicious tendency of fome extravagant opinions, which perfons, more to be esteemed for the warmth of their piety than

es the

"the foundness of their judgment, have grafted in " modern times, upon the doctrine of justification of by faith, as it is stated in the 11th, 12th, and 13th of the Articles of our Church, (which, however, " is no private tenet of the church of England, but 45 the common doctrine of all the first reformers, not to fay that it is the very corner-flone of the whole " System of redemption,) a dread of the pernicious tendency of those extravagant opinions, which " feem to emancipate the believer from the authority " of all moral law, hath given general credit to ano-" ther maxim; which I never hear without extreme " concern from the lips of a divine, either from the " pulpit or in familiar conversation; namely, that or practical religion and morality are one and the " fame thing: that moral duties conftitute the whole, or by far the better part, of practical Christianity. "Both these maxims are erroneous. Both, so far as they are received, have a pernicious influ-" ence over the ministry of the word. The first most " abfurdly separates practice from the motives of " practice. The fecond, adopting that feparations " reduces practical Christianity to heathen virtue; and the two, taken together, have much " contributed to divest our fermons of the genuine " spirit and savour of Christianity, and to reduce "them to mere moral effays: in which moral duties " are enforced, not, as indeed they might be to " good purpole, by scriptural motives, but by such er arguments as no where appear to fo much advantage as in the writings of the heathen moralists. "and are quite out of their place in a pulpit, "The rules delivered may be observed to vary " according to the temperament of the teacher. " But

"But the fystem chiefly in request, with those who feem the most in earnest in this strain of preaching, is the strict but impracticable, unsocial, fullen moral of the Stoics. Thus, under the insulation of these two pernicious maxims, it too often happens that we lose sight of that which is our proper office, to publish the word of reconciliation, to propound the terms of peace and pardon to the penitent, and we make no other use of the high commission that we bear, than to come abroad one day in the seven, dressed in solutions, and in the external garb of holi-

" ness, to be the apes of Epictetus.

"The first of the two, which excludes the laity " from all concern with the doctrinal part of reli-" gion, and directs the preacher to let the doctrine " take its chance, and to turn the whole attention " of his hearers to practice, must tacitly assume for " its foundation (for it can stand upon no other " foundation) this complex proposition: Not only "that the practice of religious duties is a far more " excellent thing in the life of a man, far more " ornamental of the Christian profession, than any "knowledge of the dostrine without the practice; "but, moreover, that men may be brought to the " practice of religion without previous instruc-"tion in its doctrines; or in other words, that " faith and practice are, in their nature, separable "things. Now the former branch of this double "affumption, that virtue is a more excellent thing " in human life than knowledge, is unquestionably " true, and a truth of great importance, which can-" not be too frequently or too earnestly inculcated. "But the second branch of the assumption, that " faith and practice are separable things, is a gross " mistake,

" mistake, or rather a manifest contradiction. " Practical holiness is the end; faith is the means: " and to suppose faith and practice separable, is to " fuppose the end attainable without the use of " means. The direct contrary is the truth. The " practice of religion will always thrive, in pro-" portion as its doctrines are generally understood "and firmly received; and the practice will dege-" nerate and decay, in proportion as the doctrine " is misunderstood or neglected. It is true, there-" fore, that it is the great duty of a preacher of " the gospel to press the practice of its precepts "upon the consciences of men; but then it is " equally true, that it is his duty to enforce this "practice in a particular way; namely, by in-" culcating its doctrines. The motives which the " revealed doctrines furnish, are the only motives " he has to do with, and the only motives by which " religious duty can be effectually enforced.

"I am aware, that it has been very much the " fashion, to suppose a great want of capacity in "the common people, to be carried any great " length in religious knowledge, more than in the "abstruse sciences. That the world and all things in it had a maker; that the Maker of the world " made man, and gave him the life which he now " enjoys; that he who first gave life, can at any " time restore it; that he can punish, in a future "life, crimes which he fuffers to be committed "with impunity in this; fome of these first prin-" ciples of religion the vulgar, it is supposed, may " be brought to comprehend. But the peculiar " doctrines of revelation, the trinity of persons in "the undivided Godhead; the incarnation of the " fecond

" fecond person; the expiation of sin by the Re-" deemer's fufferings and death; the efficacy of his " intercession; THE MYSTERIOUS COMMERCE OF "THE BELIEVER'S SOUL WITH THE DIVINE "SPIRIT; these things are supposed to be far " above their reach. If this were really the cafe, "the condition of man would indeed be mife-" rable, and the proffer of mercy, in the gospel, "little better than a mockery of their woe; for "the confequence would be, that the common " people could never be carried beyond the first of principles of what is called natural religion. Of "the efficacy of natural religion, as a rule of " action, the world has had the long expe-" rience of 1600 years. For fo much was the "interval between the institution of the Mo-" faic church, and the publication of the gof-" pel. During that interval, certainly, if not " from an earlier period, natural religion was left to try its powers on the heathen world. The refult of the experiment is, that its powers are " of no avail. Among the vulgar, natural reli-" gion never produced any effect at all; among the " learned, much of it is to be found in their wri-"tings, little in their lives. But if this natural " religion, a thing of no practical efficacy, as ex-" periment has demonstrated, be the utmost of " religion which the common people can receive, then is our preaching vain, Christ died in vain " and man must still perish. Blessed be God! the " cafe is far otherwise. As we have, on the one " fide, experimental proof of the infignificance of " what is called natural religion; fo, on the other, in the fuccess of the first preachers of Christia. " nity we have an experimental proof of the fuf-" ficiency

"ficiency of revealed religion to those very ends
"in which natural religion failed. In their success
we have experimental proof that there is nothing
in the great mystery of godliness, which the
vulgar, more than the learned, want capacity to
apprehend, since, upon the first preaching of the
gospel, the illiterate, the scorn of pharisaical
pride, who knew not the law, and were therefore
deemed accursed, were the first to understand,
and to embrace the Christian doctrine.****

"An OVER-ABUNDANT zeal to check the phren"zy of the Methodists, first introduced that
"unscriptural knowledge which confounds religion and morality.**** The great crime and
folly of the Methodists consists not in much in
heterodoxy, as in fanaticism: not in perverse

DOCTRINE, but rather in a disorderly zeal for
the propagation of the TRUTH.**** Reason,
till she has been taught by the lively oracles of
God, knows nothing of the spiritual life, and the
food brought down from heaven for its sustemance."

The Bishop here intimates, that "our sermons are often divested of the genuine spirit and savour of Christianity." If so, it is no wonder that our churches are forsaken and our religion despised. It is a fact, to which I have frequently been an eye-witness, that spacious churches in London, capable of containing thousands, are almost empty, notwithstanding the preachers every-where inculcate excellent morality. Wherever indeed there appears, what the common people call, an evangelical preacher, the churches are so crouded, that it is difficult to gain admittance. The multitude hunger and thirst for the spiritual food; yet

evangelical preaching is discouraged by many in high places, because it is said to savour of enthusiasm and to delude the vulgar*. But it is this preaching alone which will preserve Christianity among us, and cause it to be considered as any thing better than a state-engine for the depression of the people.

• Erasmus was a confummate judge of preaching and preachers. Let us hear him.

Doctos puto quotquot crediderunt EVANGELIO. Cur enim indocti debeant appellari, qui, (ut nibil aliud,) e symbolo apostolorum
didicerunt illam uetramundanam philosophiam, quam non
Pythagoras aut Plato, sed ipse Dei Filius tradidit bominibus;
quia a Christo docti sunt, quâ viâ ad quem selicitatis scopum
tendere. Ubicunque est vera sanctitas, ibi est magna philosophia minimeque vulgaris eruditio. Sed tamen inter bos egregie
doctos excellunt, quibus peculiari Spiritus muniscentia datum est,
ut ad justitiam erudiant multos; quibus Dominus dedit labia,
non in quibus illa gentium restous slexunima, sed in quibus ex
unctione Spiritus disfusa est granta coulestis.
Erasm. Eccles.

SECTION XX.

The Church of England teaches the true Doctrine of Grace.

In recommending to more general notice the doctrine of grace, I make no pretentions to a new discovery. It is obviously the doctrine of the Gospel; it is obviously the doctrine of the Church; it is fully acknowledged by all who sincerely use that form of prayer, which is established by the authority not only of those who composed it, but of those who ever since its composition, even to the present day, retain it in the divine service.

Bishop Gibson, who was certainly a zealous friend to the Church of England, has collected a number of passages from the liturgy, to shew that the public offices of the Church are duly regardful of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

"In the daily service, we pray to God to grant us true repentance and his Holy Spirit—to replenish the King with the grace of his Holy
Spirit—to endue the Royal Family with his
Holy Spirit—to send down upon our Bishops

"and Curates, and all Congregations commit-

"ted to their charge, the healthful Spirit of his grace—that the Catholic Church may be

" guided and governed by his good Spirit, and that

"the fellowship of the Holy Ghost may be ever

" with us.

"In the Litany we pray that God will illuminate all Bishops, Priests, and Deacons with the true knowledge

"knowledge and understanding of his Word-will

" endue us with the grace of his Holy Spirit, and

"that we may all bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.

"In the Collects we pray that God will grant us the true circumcifion of the Spirit, that our

" hearts and all our members being mortified from

" all worldly and carnal lusts, we may in all things

"obey his bleffed will—that God will fend his

"Holy Ghost, and pour into our hearts the most excellent gift of charity—that we may ever obey

"the godly motions of the Spirit in righteousness and

"true holiness—that by his holy inspiration we

"may think those things that be good, and by his

"merciful guiding may perform the same—that

66 God will not leave us comfortless, but send to us

"his Holy Ghost to comfort us—that by his Spirit we may have a right judgment in all things, and

evermore rejoice in his holy comfort—that his

Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule

our hearts-that he will cleanse the thoughts

" of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy

" Spirit.

"In the office for Confirmation, we pray for the persons to be confirmed, that God will

ftrengthen them with the Holy Ghost, the Com-

of forter, and daily increase in them his manifold

" gifts of grace, the spirit of wisdom and under-

"franding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly frength, the spirit of knowledge and true god

"linefs—that he will fill them with the spirit of

his holy fear-and that they may daily increase

"in his Holy Spirit more and more."

The

The articles of original fin, free-will, and justification evince that the Church of England maintains the doctrine of light, fanctity, and life, deriveable from the operation of the Holy Ghost. And there is a curious passage in a book, written by Archbishop Cranmer and the Committee of Divines, entitled Necessary Erudition for a Christian Man, which fully declares, that " be-" fides many other evils that came by the fall of "man, the high power of man's reason and free-"dom of will were wounded and corrupted; and " all men thereby brought into fuch blindness and "infirmity, that they cannot eschew fin, except " they be illuminated and made free by an especial " grace, that is to fay, by a supernatural help and " working of the Holy Ghoft *."

There can be no doubt, in the mind of an impartial inquirer, that the church teaches the doctrine of supernatural influence in plain and strong terms; and that it derives it from the holy scriptures. For it is by the Spirit of wisdom that our understandings are enlightened: it is by the Spirit that we are rooted and grounded in love, and that our sould save purified in obeying the truth; it is by the Spirit that we are called unto liberty; for where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; in a word, it is by the Spirit that all our infirmities are helped, and that we are strengthened with might in the inner mant."

^{*} This book was published by Henry VIII. 1543, and approved by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Lower House of Parliament.

[†] Eph. i. 17. 2 Pet. 22. Gal. v. 13. 2 Cor. iii. 17. Rom. viii. 26. Ephef. iii. 16, 17.

"Without me," fays Christ, "ye can do no-"thing." Our bleffed Saviour opened the understandings of his disciples, that they might understand the scriptures. The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that the attended to the things that were spoken of Paul. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the faints. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus. Christ.-No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost .- For by grace ye are faved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God *.

If there be meaning in words, these passages evince the reality and necessity of internal illumination from the great fountain of light. And what says the homily of the church? "In reading of God's word, he most profiteth, not always that is most ready in turning of the book, or in saying of it without the book, but he that is most turned into it, that is, most inspired with the Holy Ghost." In the same homily, a passage from Chrysostom is quoted to the following pur-

^{*} John, xv. 5. Acts, xvi. 14. Ephef. i. 17, 18. 1 Cor. xii. 3. Luke, xxiv. 45. 1 Cor. ii. 14. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

port: "Man's human and worldly wisdom and "science is not needful to the understanding of "scripture, but the revelation of the Holy "Ghost, who, inspireth the true meaning unto "them that with humility and diligence do seek "therefore."

In the Ordination Office, the Bishop says to the candidates for priest's orders, "Ye cannot have a "mind or will thereto of yourselves, for the will and ability is given of God alone. Therefore ye ought and have need to pray earnestly for the Holy Spirit. You will continually pray to God the Father, by the mediation of our only Saviour Jesus Christ, for the heavenly assistance of the Holy Ghost."

A great number of citations might be brought to prove that the doctrine of grace or supernatural assistance is established by the church in exact conformity to the scriptures*; but it is not necessary to insist on a truth which is evident to every one who reads the Common-prayer book and the Bible.

^{*} It never can be confishent with the character of an boness man solemnly to subscribe to the doctrines of grace, seriously to pray in the church for divine influence, and then to teach and preach against the whole doctrine.

SECTION XXI.

On the Means of obtaining the Evidence of Christianity, afforded by the Holy Spirit.

I now come to the most important part of my subject. I have produced, as I intended, the unexceptionable authority of great and good men, most eminent divines, to countenance and support me in recommending, above all other evidence, the evidence of the Holy Ghost, to the truth of Christianity. After the suffrages of such men in favour of this sublime doctrine, no man can justly call it heterodox or improperly enthusiastical. I could indeed cite many other most respectable authorities; but I have already exceeded the just limits of quotation. It now remains to point out the means of obtaining this evidence.

FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD*. To the Giver only it belongs to prescribe the means of obtaining his bounty. He has prescribed the WRITTEN WORD and PRAYER. Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the WORD OF GOD*. But the whole tenor of the Gospel proves, that the WRITTEN WORD has not efficacy of itself to convince our understandings, nor reform our hearts; to produce either faith in God or repentance from dead works, without the aid of the Holy Ghost.

Now the aid of the Holy Ghost is promised to PRAYER: "If ye," says our Saviour, "being "evil, know how to give good gifts unto your

^{*} Eph. ii. 8.

⁺ Rom. x. 7.

" children, how much more shall God give the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask him?"

The Holy Spirit, it appears from this passage, is the best gift, which the best, wisest and most powerful of Beings, can bestow, and he has promised it to those who ask it with saith and humility. An easy condition of obtaining the greatest comfort of which the heart of man is capable, together with sull evidence of the truth of Christianity.

But do the inquirers into the truth of Christia. nity feek its evidence in this manner? Do they fall on their knees, and lift up their hearts in fupplication? It appears rather that they trust to their own power, than to the power of God. They take down their folios, they have recourse to their logic, their metaphyfics, nay even their mathematics*, and examine the mere historical and external evidence with the eyes of criticism and heathen philosophy. The unbelievers, on the other hand, do the fame; and, as far as wit and fubtle reason. ing goes, there are many who think that a Tindal and a Collins were more than equal to a Clarke and a Coneybeare. There is no doubt but that infidelity is diffused by theological controversy, whenever the illumination of the Spirit, the SANCTITY of the Gospel, is entirely laid aside, and the whole cause left to the decision of human wit and invention.

He that would be a Christian indeed, and not merely a disputant or talker about Christianity, must seek better evidence than man, short-sighted

^{*} See Ditton, Baxter, Huet, and many others who undertake to demonstrate, almost geometrically, the truth of the gospel.

as he is with the most improved sagacity, ignorant as he is with the deepest learning, can by any means afford. He must, in the words of the Pfalmift*, "open his mouth and draw in the Spirit." The Holy Ghost will give him the SPIRIT OF SUPPLICATION t, which will breathe out in prayer, and inhale from him who first inspired the divine particlet, fresh supplies of grace. He must continue instant in prayer. This will preserve his mind in a state fit to receive the Holy Visitant from on high, who brings with him balfam for the heart, and light for the understanding. The refult will be full evidence of Christianity, full confidence in Jesus Christ, joy and peace on earth, and a lively hope of falvation. What a funshine must a mind in such a state enjoy: how different from the gloominess of the sceptic or unbeliever; how superior to the coldness of the mere disputant in scholastic or sophistical divinity!

With respect to the efficacy of PRAYER in bringing down the assistance, the illumination of the Holy Ghost, not merely in teaching doctrinal notions, but in the actual conduct of life, let us hear the declaration of LORD CHIEF JUSTICE HALE, whose example I select, because he was a layman, a man deeply conversant in the business of the world, a great lawyer, and therefore may contribute to prove, that they who value themselves on their worldly sagacity, and frequently consider the affairs of religion as trisles, compared with the contests for property and the concerns of jurisprudence, need not, in the most active life

[•] Pfal. cxix. 131. † Zach. xii. 10.

[†] Divinæ particulam auræ.

and most exalted stations, be ashamed of the Gos-

- "I can call," fays he, "my own EXPERIENCE" to witness, that even in the external actions.
- " occurrences and incidents of my whole life,
- " I was never disappointed of the best guidance and
- " direction, when in humility, and a fense of de-
- " ficiency, and diffidence of my own ability to
- " direct myfelf, or to grapple with the difficulties
- " of my life, I have implored the fecret guidance of
- " the divine Wisdom and Providence."

SECTION XXII.

Temperance necessary to the Reception and Continuance of the Holy Spirit in the Heart, and consequently to the Evidence of Christianity afforded by Divine Illumination.

THE Apostle fays, Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the SPIRIT*. The word arwing in the original, here rendered excess, corresponds with the Latin prodigalitas, which, in the Roman law, characterised the spendthrift and debauchee, incapable, from his vices, of managing his own affairs, and therefore placed by the prætor under the guardianship of trustees, without whose concurrence he could perform no legal act. He was confidered as an infant and an idiot. The words of the Apostle may then be thus paraphrased. "Be not intempe-" rate in wine, because intemperance will destroy "your reason, and degrade you to a state of in-" fantine imbecility, without infantine innocence; " but be filled with the SPIRIT: that is, let your " reason be exalted, purified, clarified to the highest " state by the co-operation of the divine reason, "which cannot be, if you destroy "the natural " faculties which God has given you, by drunk-" enness and gluttony."

I think it evident, from this passage, as well as from the conclusions of reason, that all excess tends to exclude the radiance of grace. The men-

^{*} Eph. v. 18.

[†] See Dr. Powel's Sermon on the text.

tal eye is weakened by it, and cannot bear the celestial lustre*.

That great master of reasoning, Aristotle, maintained that pleasures are corruptive of principles (Principles (Pri

One of our own philosophers, who in many respects equalled the antients, justly observes, "That anger, impatience, admiration of persons, or a pusillanimous over-estimation of them, desire of victory more than of truth, too close an attention to the things of this world, as riches, power, dignities, immersion of the mind into the body, and slaking of that divine fire; of the soul by intemperance and luxury; all

Hierocles, in Praf. ad Pythag.

^{*} Ωσπες οφθαλμω λημωντι, η ου πεκαθαςμενω, τα σφοδος φωτεινα ιδειν ουκ διοντε' ουτω η τη ψυχη μη την αςετην κεκτημενη, το της αληθειως ενοπτεισασθαι καλλος. As it is impossible for an eye, labouring under a malady which causes a defluction, to see clearly any very bright and brilliant object, till the impurity is removed; so it is for the mind, unpossessed of virtue, to reslect the beautiful image of truth.

[†] Dr. Henry More. ‡ Igneus ille vigor.

"these are very great enemies to all manner of knowledge, as well natural as divine."

I therefore earnestly recommend it to every serious man, who wishes to be convinced of Christianity, to consider it in the morning*, before either the cares of the world, or the sumes of that intemperance which conviviality sometimes occasions, blunt the feelings of the heart, and spreads a film over the visual nerve of the mental eyet.

* Those that feek me early (mane) shall find me.

† Si præceptor, HOMO, gravatur homini disciplinam bumanam committere, puta dialecticen aut arithmeticen, somnolento, oscitanti, aut crapula gravate; quanto magis SAPIENTIA CŒLESTIS dedignabitur loqui voluptatum bujus mundi amore temulentis, cælestium rerum neglectu, nauseantibus?

t Verum bac impranfus.

Hor.

SECTION XXIII.

On improving AFFLICTIONS duly as a Means of Grace and Belief in the Gospel.

A CELEBRATED divine*, on his recovery from a fevere fit of fickness, is reported to have faid, "I have learned, under this fickness, to "KNOW SIN AND GOD." He had studied divinity, during many years, with great attention; he had prayed and preached with great ardour; yet he acknowledges, that till the affliction of fickness visited him, he was unacquainted with those important subjects, SIN AND GOD; subjects which he had so frequently considered in private, and discoursed upon before an admiring audience.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, said one, who had sinned egregiously in his prosperous days, and who was rendered wife by affliction.

Afflictions, if suffered to have their perfect work, will certainly become the means of grace, cause belief in the consolatory gospel, and ultimately lead to salvation. The wandering mind returns, like the prodigal son, when under the pressure of distress, to the bosom of its sather. The kind sather goes forth to meet it on its return, and the interview happily terminates in perfect love and reconciliation.

More have been convinced of the truth of Christianity by a severe iliness, a great loss, a disappoint-

^{*} Occolampadius.

ment*, or the death of one whom the foul loved, than by all the defences, proofs, and apologies which have ever been produced in the most celebrated schools of theology. The heart was opened, and rendered soft and susceptible by sorrow, and the dew of divine grace enabled to find its way to the latent seeds of Christian virtue.

Such being the beneficial effect of afflictions, it is much to be lamented, that many will not fuffer them to operate favourably on their dispositions, and thus counteract, by the good they may ultimately produce, the pain which they immediately They fly from folitude, they banish reflection. They drink the cup of intoxication, or feek the no less inebriating draft of diffipating plea-Thus they lose one of the most favourable opportunities of receiving those divine impressions which would give them COMFORT under their afflictions, fuch as the world cannot give; and afford them such conviction as would render them Christians indeed, and lead to all those beneficial confequences of faith, which are plainly reprefented in the scripture.

BRETONNEAU.

^{*} Le moment de la GRACE, c'est une bumiliation qui Dieu vous envoie, et qui vous eloigne du monde, parceque vous i'y pouvez plus paroitre avec honneur. C'est la disgrace d'un maitre a qui une lache complaisance vous faisoit en mille rencontres sacrisier les interets de votre conscience; le changement d'un ami dont le commerce trop frequent vous entraisoit dans la vice & vous y entretenoit. C'est une perte de biens, une maladie, un chagrin domestique, ou etranger; ce sont des soussirances; tout, uors Dieu, devient amer; on ne trouve plus de consolation que dans lui; & rebute des choses bumuines, on commence a Gouter les choses du ciel.

SECTION XXIV.

On Devotion—a Means, as well as an Effect, of Grace—no sincere Religion can subsist without it.

Many theologists, who have written with the acuteness of an Aristotle, and the acrimony of a Juvenal, against all sorts of insidels and heretics, in defence of Christianity, seem to have forgotten one very material part of religion—that which consists of devotional sentiment, and the natural servours of a sincere piety. Some of them seem to reprobate, and hold them in abhorrence. They inveigh against them as enthusiasm; they laugh at them as the cant of hypocrisy. Such men have the coldness of Bishop Butler, without the ingenuity; the contentious spirit of Dr. Bentley, without the wit or erudition.

True religion cannot exist without a considerable degree of devotion. On what is true religion founded but on Love—the love of God, and the love of our neighbour? And with respect to the love of God, what says our Saviour? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. No language can more expressly and emphatically describe the ardour of devotion. Out of the heart the mouth speaketh. If the heart feels the love of God, in the degree which our Saviour requires, the language of prayer and thanksgiving will be always glowing, and, on extraordinary occasions, even rapturous.

The effectual FERVENT prayer of a righteous man availeth much: if it be not fervent, it cannot be fincere, and therefore cannot be expected to avail. Love must add wings to prayer, to wast it to the throne of grace.

"Man has a principle of love implanted in his nature, a magnetism of passion*," by which he constantly attaches himself to that which appears to him good and beautiful; and what so good, what so beautiful, as the archetype and model of all excellence? Shall he conceive the image, and not be charmed with its loveliness?

Worship or adoration implies lively affection. If it be cold, it is a mere mockery, a formal compliance with customs for the sake of decency. It is a lip-service, of which knaves, hypocrites, and infidels are capable, and which they render, for the sake of temporal advantage.

Will any man condemn the ardour which the scriptures themselves exhibit? Must they not be allowed to afford a model for imitation? And are they written in the cold, dull style of an academical professor, lecturing in the schools of divinity? No; they are written in warm, animated, metaphorical, and poetical language; not with the precision of the schoolmen; not with the dryness of system-makers; but with florid, rhetorical, impassioned appeals to the feelings and imagination. What are PSALMS, but the ebullitions of passion, forrow, joy, love, and gratitude?

The truth is, that the most important subject which can be considered by man, must, if considered with seriousness and sincerity, excite a warm interest. The fire of devotion may not, indeed, be equably supported, because such equability is not consistent with the constitution of human nature; but it will, for the most part, burn with a clear and steady slame, and will certainly, at no time, and in no

circumstances, be utterly extinguished.

Where the heart is deeply interested, there will be eagerness and agitation. Suppose a man, who fpeaks, in the church, of the Holy Ghoft, and other most important religious subjects, with perfect fang froid, repairing to the Stock-exchange, and just going to make a purchase. The price fluctu-Observe how he listens to his broker's reports. His cheeks redden, and his eyes sparkle. he is in earnest. Nature betrays his emotion. It is not uncharitable to conclude that his heart is literally with his treasure; and that with respect to the riches of divine grace, he values them little; and, like Gallio, careth for none of thefe things. View him again, at a great man's levee, and fee with what awe he eyes a patron. His attention approaches to adoration. He is tremblingly folicitous to pleafe, and would undergo any painful restraint, rather than give the slightest offence. The world will not condemn, but applaud his anxiety; yet if he is earnest and fervent, when his interest is infinitely greater, in securing the tranquillity of his mind, under all the changes and chances of life, he is despised as an enthusiast, a bigot, a fool, or a madman.

A man of fense and true Goodness will certainly take care not to make an oftentation of his devotional feelings; but at the same time he will beware of suppressing, in his endeavour to moderate and conceal them.

He will never forget, that the same sun which emits light, gives, at the same time, a genial heat, that enlivers and cherishes all nature.

SECTION XXV.

On Divine Attraction.

S HALL we believe our Saviour himself, or some poor mortal, who has learned a little Greek, Latin, or Hebrew, and upon the strength of his scanty knowledge of those languages, and a little verbal criticism, picked up in the schools of an university, assumes the pen of a Controversialist, and denies the evident meaning of words plainly and emphatically spoken by Jesus Christ? Our Saviour says, in language particularly direct, "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath fent me, DRAW HIM."

Faustus Regiensis, Wolzogenius, Brenius, Slichtingius, Sykes, Whitby, Clarke, and many others, endeavour to explain away the meaning of the word DRAW, (ελαυση,) because they have taken a side in the polemics of Theology, against the doctrine of Divine Grace.

But what have we to do with Faustus, Wolzogenius, Slichtingius, and the rest, when we have before us the words of Jesus Christ? By them it appears that there is an ATTRACTION in the spiritual world, as well as the natural; and that the Spirit of God, a benign philanthropic Spirit, unites itself to the soul of man, and communicates to it comfort, fanctity, and illumination.

Men do not controvert the received fystems of natural philosophy. They believe in the attraction of gravitation, cohesion, magnetism, and electricity

But in this there is no visible agency, no sensible efflux, influx, or impulse. Yet they believe it, and certainly with reason; but why should they think that God acts thus on matter, comparatively vile, and leaves MIND uninfluenced? Mind, that pure, etherial effence, which must be said to approach in its nature to Divinity, (if man can conceive any thing of divine,) and which has an inborn tendency to assimilate with its like.

God, we are told in scripture, is love. But love always attaches itself to its object. It is not compatible with love to be felfish and solitary. It delights in affimilation. The spirit of that God who is love, still unites itself with man, for whom it has already fhewn fo much affectionate regard, in the creation and redemption. It could not be confiftent with the love and mercy of God to man, to leave him entirely, for ages, without any intercourse, any light, any communication, but a written word, in a language unknown, unread by many, and which, without Divine interpolition, might be corrupted by the wickedness of man, or lost by his negligence. God's Spirit, acting upon the foul of man, at this hour and for ever, is a LIVING, ENERGETIC AND EVER-LASTING GOSPEL. The promife of God's affiftance by his Spirit, (as St. Peter affured the first converts to Christianity,) was unto them, and unto their children, and to all that WERE AFAR OFF*, their faccesfors to the remotest ages, even to as many as the Lord their God Should call.

Man must be ATTRACTED to God by the spirit of love in the Divine nature, or else he ceases to be in the

Christian fystem; and what may be the consequence to the soul in its aberration, is known only to him who knoweth all things. But surely every thinking mortal will gladly follow the Divine attraction, since it gradually draws him from this low vale, where sin and sorrow abound, up to the realms of bliss eternal; and affords him, during his earthly pilgrimage, the sweetest solace.

The human foul affimilating with the Divine, is the drop of water gravitating to the ocean, from which it was originally feparated; and cohering with it as foon as it comes within the sphere of its atraction; it is the child clinging to the bosom of its parent; it is the wandering, weary exile hastening with joy to his native home. Let us endeavour to cherish an inclination for re-union; let us follow all the known means of accomplishing it, and it will be finally and completely effected by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of love*.

* Let us hear a Heathen philosopher speak on the union between God and good men.

Inter bonos viros ac Deum, amicitia est, conciliante virtute; amicitiam dico? etiam necessitudo et similitudo.

SENECA.

SECTION XXVI.

On the Difficulties of the Scripture.

In his folis literis et quod non affequor, tamen adoro-ERASEUS.

approached with awe, and viewed with veneration, it is the WRITTEN WORD of revelation. Acknowledged fanctity and long duration combine to throw an air of divinity around it. It is worthy to be kept in the holy of holies. But I cannot agree with those zealous votaries who pretend either that there are no difficulties in it, or that they are all removable by the light of learning. I confess that criticism has removed many difficulties; but I am convinced that many still remain, which, I fear, will never give way to human fagacity. There they must remain, with all the majesty of clouds and darkness around them, till the sun of righteousness shall appear in his full glory.

But shall difficulties cause disbelies? Are there then no difficulties in nature, as well as in the worlds of grace? I cannot step into the garden or the meadow; I cannot cast my eyes to the horizon, without encountering difficulties. Yet I believe the existence of the things I see there, and I am led from the observation of general good, mixed with partial evil, to conclude, that verily there is a God. I conclude in the same manner, from what I do understand and know to be good in the gospel, that verily Jesus is the Christ; and

that

that the parts of the gospel which I do not comprehend, are good, because those which I am able to understand are so beyond all doubt and comparison.

All that is necessary to my happiness in the gofpel is fufficiently clear. I learn there that the HOLY GHOST is vouchfafed to me, and to all men, now and till time shall be no more. This I confider as the LIVING GOSPEL. This supplies all defects, if any there should be, in the written word; and the dark and unintelligible parts of the gofpel, furrounded by celestial radiance, become like spots in the fun, which neither deform its beauty, nor diminish its lustre. I regard them not therefore; I bow to them with reverence, as to facred things upon the altar, covered with a veil from the eves of mortal or profane intrusion. It is enough that I have learned, in the gospel, many moral truths; and this one great truth, that God Almighty, at this moment, pours an EMANATION of himself into the fouls of all who feek the glorious gift by fervent prayer, and endeavour to retain it by obedience to his will. It is enough: why need I perplex my understanding with fearthing into those fecret things which belong to the Lord; or acquire a minute, cavilling habit, which never can differer any thing of more importance than that which I already know; but which, if indulged prefumptuously, may lead me to scepticism, and terminate in infidelity? Some parts of the holy volume are fealed: I will not attempt to burft it open; or vainly conjecture what these parts conceal. I will wait with patience and humility for God's good time. In the mean time I will rejoice; and my flesh shall rest in hope; because I have been admitted to inspect

the book, and have learned that the SPIRIT still attends the written word, ministering at this hour, and illuminating, with the lamp of Heaven, whatever darkness overshadows the path of life.

This persuasion adds new glory to the written gospel. It throws a heavenly lustre over the page. It is not left alone to effect the great purpose of men's recovery; so that whatever difficulties or defects it may be allowed to retain, by the wise providence of God, the difficulties will be removed, and the defects supplied, so far as to accomplish the great end, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, which accompanies it in its progress down the stream of time, like the pillar of fire, attending the children of Israel*.

* O TOI VIOI SIGI TOU POTOS E THE DIEXOVIAS THE XAIVES DIADERNES SU TO TOU TOUS WITH YAR IN XARIS STUDIES SU TAIS LARGIAIS AUTOV TOUS VOLOUS TOU TYSULAIOS. OUX OPSILOUGIN OUV SIS TAS YRAPAS MOVOV TAS DIA MELANOS YSYRAMMENAS THEOROGY TOU GEOU SYYRA PSITOUS VOLOUS TOU TYSULAIOS E TA STOURAVIA MUSICAL AND THE VOLOUS TOU TYSULAIOS E TA STOURAVIA MUSICAL AND AS MADY AS ARE THE SONS THE ROUGHLES AND OF GOD; FOR GRACE ITSELFIC THE SONS THE WORLD IN THE HOLY SPIRIT, ARE LAUGHT OF GOD; FOR GRACE ITSELFIC THEY ARE NOT THEY ARE NO

MACARIUS in Homil. 15.

SECTION XXVII.

The OMNIPRESENCE of God a Doctrine universally allowed; but how is God every where present but by his Spirit, which is the HOLY GHOST.

Ouders Osas ness.

Nothing is without Deity.

MARC ANTONING

THEY who maintain, if there be any such, that God having, about eighteen hundred years ago, signified his will to mankind, has ever since that time withdrawn his agency from the human mind, do, in effect, deny the omnipresence, and with it the omniscience, providence, and goodness of the Deity. But what say the scriptures? He is NOT FAR FROM EVERY ONE OF US; FOR IN HIM WE LIVE, AND MOVE, AND HAVE OUR BEING*.

But is it to be believed, that when he is thus intimately present with us, he either cannot, or will
not, influence our sentiments? Why is he thus
present? or why should he confine his agency over
us to a LITTLE BOOK, in a foreign and dead language, which many never see at all, which more
cannot read, and which sew can perfectly understand; and concerning the literal meaning of the
most important DOCTRINAL parts of which, the
most search and judicious are to this hour divided
in opinion?

* Acts, xvii. 27.

The heathens * had more enlarged and worthied ideas of the divine nature. They indeed believed in fupernatural agency on the mind of man; though they difgraced their belief by the abfurdities of polytheism. Every part of the universe was peopled by them, with supernatural agents, and the most distinguished among them believed their virtuous sentiments inspired, and their good actions directed by a tutelar deity. I dwell not upon the instance of Socrates's Demont; and I only mention

* Ipfe Deus HUMANO GENERI ministrat; ubique et omnibus presso est.—God himself administers to the human race; he is present every where, and to every man. SENECA EPIST.

Quocunque te flexeris, ibi illum videbis occurrentem tibi. Nibil ab illo vacat. Opus fuum ipse implet.—Whichever way you turn, you will meet God. Nothing is without him. He fills his own work completely.

Senec. De Beneric. Lib. 4. Cap. 8.

† It is worth while, however, to infert the following fine passage from Plato, in which Socrates afferts the necessity of Inpernatural agency, in removing a dark cloud from the human mind, previously to its being able to learn how to regulate conduct, either towards gods or men. Reason, till this dark cloud should be removed by divine Providence, he thought incapable of discovering either moral or divine truth with certainty.

S. 'Αναγμαίον ὖν ἐςι περιμένειν ἔως ἀν τις μάθη ὡς δεξ τη πρὸι θεὲς τὴ πρὸς ἀνθρωπες διακείσθαι. Α. Πότε ἔν παρέςται ὁ χρόν۞ ὧτ۞, ὧ Σώκραθες; τὰ τίς ὁ παιδευσων;—ΣΩΚΡ. Οὖνός ἐςιν ὧ μέλει περί σε. ἀλλὰ δοκεί μοι, ώσπες τῶ Διομηθει Φησὶ την 'Αθηνῶν' Ομης ۞ ἀπὸ τῶν ὀΦθαλμῶν ἀΦελει τὴν 'ΑΚΛΥ'Ν,

'Ο ρρ ε υ γιγνώσκοι ήμε ν θε ον ήθε κς άνδοα, Ετω κο σε θε το άπο της ψυχης ποωτον άφελον α την 'ΑΚΛΥΝ, η νύν παρέσα τυγχάνει, τη ηνικαύτ' ήδη ποσφέρειν δι ών μέλλεις γνώσεσθαι ήμε ν "κακον εδε κο έσθλον" tion the topic, to prove that the doctrine is not likely to be very UNRBASONABLE, fince it was maintained by men who are acknowledged to have been fingularly endowed with the rational faculty.

The omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God were strenuously maintained, not only by the wifest of the heathens, but the most learned and rational of christian divines; among whom was Dr. Samuel Clarke, a man by constitution and studies as far removed from enthusiasm, as it is possible to conceive. But the omnipresence of God being allowed as a true doctrine, it will not be difficult to believe his agency on the human mind by fupernatural impression. The difficulty would be to believe that the divine Spirit could be PRESENT always and every where with us, and yet never act upon us, but leave the moral world, after the writing of the New Testament, to depend on the fidelity of translations, the interpretations of fallible men, the preaching and teaching of

No prope Finem. — (Socrates and Alcibiades discourse.) S. It is necessary then to wait till one is informed how one ought to behave, both in religious and social duties, to God and to men. —A. O Socrates, when will that time come, and who shall teach me?—S. Even he who careth for you; but it appears to me, as Homer represents Minerva removing a dark cloud from the eyes of Diomed, that he might distinguish gods from men in the battle, so he who careth for you must sirst remove the dark cloud from your mind, which now hangs over it, and then you will use those means by which you may know "the good from ill," which, in your present state, you seem to me unable to distinguish.

The philosopher seems to have seen the necessity of divine revelation, and to have predicted the illumination of the Spirit of God.

fcholars,

scholars, deriving all they know from dictionaries, and differing continually even on such doctrines as constitute the very corner-stones of the whole fabric.

The doctrine of God's total inaction, in the moral and intellectual world, is irreligious and unphilosophical. The wisest heathens exploded it. Fortunately it is resuted in the strongest language of scripture. For after our Saviour's ascension, the Holy Spirit was expressly promised, and the MINISTRATION of the Spirit, co-operating on the heart of man with the written word, is to continue its energy, as it does at this hour, to the end of time.

The spirit of God is every where present, like the air which we inhale. It is no less necessary to intellectual life, than the air to animal. There is a remarkable passage, apposite to the present subject, in the meditations of Antoninus, which I shall give in the translation of Collier, and as it is quoted by Delany.

"Let your foul," fays the philosopher, " receive the Deity, as your blood does the air; for the influences of the one are no less vital than the

other. This correspondence is very practica-

" ble; for there is an ambient OMNIPRESENT Spirit,

"which lies as open and pervious to your mind,
as the air you breathe does to your lungs. But

"then you must remember to be disposed to

"draw it.

"If," continues Dr. Delany, "this gracious gift of Heaven should be denied, because it is not

" found to dwell with the wicked, I answer, that

"men may as well deny the existence of the DEW,
because it is not often found upon clods and

" filth,

"filth, nor even upon grass, trampled with pol-

"Let the grace of God be considered as having fome analogy, some resemblance to the DEW OF HEAVEN; the dew of Heaven, which falls alike upon all objects below it, as the grace of God doth upon all mankind, but resteth not upon things desiled. Purity abideth not with pollution."

There is an elemental fire, the electrical fluid, diffused through all nature. Though unseen, its energy is mighty. So also the Divine Spirit actuates the intellectual world, omnipresent, irresistible, invisible.

SECTION XXVIII.

The Want of Faith could not be criminal, if it depended only on the Understanding; but Faith is a Virtue, because it originates from virtuous dispositions favoured by the Holy Spirit.

AITH is always required and represented in the gospel as a moral virtue. This alone establishes the doctrine of this book, that faith, or the evidence of the Christian religion, arises from obedience to its laws. There could be no virtue in faith, if it were produced in the mind by demonfrative proofs, such as many apologists for Christianity have endeavoured to display. But there is great virtue in OBEDIENCE to the moral precepts of the gospel. The heart must be well inclined that endeavours to learn and perform its duty from the dictates of the gospel, notwithstanding the doubts or disbelief which may occasionally arife in the understanding concerning the divine original of so excellent a rule of morality. Such an inclination draws down upon it the favour of God, and confequently the illumination of the Holv Ghost. The doubts and disbelief are gradually removed. A life of piety and good morals is the never-failing refult. And thus faith both begins and ends in virtue.

"The reason," says Dr. Clarke, "why faith (which is generally looked upon as an act of

" moral

[&]quot; understanding, and so not in our power) in the

[&]quot; New Testament is always insisted upon as a

"moral virtue, is, because faith, in the scripture fense, is not barely an act of the understanding, but a mixed act of the will also, consisting very much in that simplicity and unprejudicedness of mind, which our Saviour calls receiving the kingdom of God, as a little child, in that free-dom from guile and deceit, which was the character of Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed; and in that teachable disposition, and desire to know the will of God, for which the Beræans were so highly commended, who searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were true."

This simple, teachable, unprejudiced state of mind is in itself amiable. It is pleasing both to God and good men. It is esteemed even by the wicked. It is precisely the state in which the Holy Spirit delights, and with which he will make his abode, bringing with him comfort and illumination. To use the poet's words;

"And that which he delights in must be happy."

If indeed it were a moral virtue merely to believe a narrative on the credibility of the narrators, or the probability of the circumstances, then would it be a moral virtue to believe a well-authenticated news-paper. But to believe the gospel requires purity and piety of heart, those lovely qualities which the imagination conceives characteristic of the angelic nature. It implies a disposition which delights in devotion to God, and beneficence toman; a disposition cheerful, tranquil, and which enjoys every innocent satisfaction of this life, sweetened with the hope, that when the sun sets.

it will rife in new and additional fplendor. Faith, accompanied with hope and charity, conflitutes the true Christian; a living image of virtue, and forming that beautiful model which the philosopher wished, but despaired to see; TRUTH EMBODIED, VIRTUE PERSONIFIED, walking forth among the sons of men, and exciting, by its conspicuous loveliness, an universal desire of imitation.

SECTION XXIX.

Of the scriptural word "UNCTION;" its high mysterious Meaning.

THE very title of our Saviour (numb and XPIETOE) is the ANDINTED; and the operation of the Holy Ghost is called in the facred scriptures (XPIEMA) UNCTION. This idea of the Chrisma pervades the whole doctrine of grace.

"The anointing with oil," fays Hammond, denoted, among the Jews, the preferring one before another, (and the Targum generally renders it by a word which fignifies preferring or advancing,) and so became the ceremony of consecrating to any special office, and was used in the installing men to places of any emi-

The word Chrisma, or unction, was hence affumed to fignify the act of the Holy Ghost, in consecrating those who are favoured by divine grace. The consequence of this unction is illumination; for St. John says, "Ye have an "unction from the Holy One, (the Holy Ghost,) and ye (in consequence) know all things*;" that is, all things that concern the nature and byidence of Christ's religion. Again he says, "the anointing which ye have received of the Holy Ghost) abideth in you; and ye meed not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and

" is truth, and is no lie; even as it has taught you,
" ye shall abide in him.*"

The idea of the Chrisma, I repeat, or unction †, pervades the whole doctrine of divine grace. It gives a name to him who brought down the great gift of the Spirit, and who himself had the hallowed unction without measure; for what is fignified by Christ, but the Anointed §?

I have introduced these observations on the name of Christ, partly with a view to expose the falfe learning of a French philosopher, who has attacked Christianity with singular artifice. The celebrated Mr. Volney affirms, that Christianity is but the allegorical worship of the sun-a mere mode of oriental superstition, under the cabalistical names of CHRISEN OF CHRIST, the etymology of which, according to him, has no reference to the CHRISMA, UNCTION, but to CHRIS, an aftrological name among the Indians for the sun, and fignifying conservator; " whence," fays he, "the Hindoo god, Chrisen, or Christna, and the "Christian Christos, the son of Mary." Many of the French philosophers, and perhaps Volney, are unacquainted with Greek.

But I hope the christian scholar will never give up the Greek etymology of the word Christ, evidently a translation of the Hebrew Messiah; nor the sublime and mysterious doctrine which it leads to, the metaphorical anointing of the Holy Ghotl,

^{*} I John, ii. 27.

[†] Dieu fait couler dans l'ame je ne seais quelle ONCTION qui la remplit.

BRETONNEAU.

the fanctifying, confecrating, purifying influence of divine grace *.

* Mr. Volney further fays, that "YESUS, or Jesus, was an antient name given to young Bacchus, the clandestine fon of the virgin, Minerva, who, in the whole history of his life, and even in his death, calls to mind the history of the God of the Christians; that is, the STAR OF THE DAY, of which they are both of them EMBLEMS." Let us avoid the folly of fanciful learning; and say rather that the Star of the Day is an EMBLEM of JESUS CHRIST, gloriously enlightening, and vitally warming, by his insuence, the INTELLECTUAL system.

SECTION XXX.

On what is called by devout Persons EXPERIENCE in Religion.

THERE is a peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and basses all power of description. The slavour of a peach or a pine-apple is delightful to the palate, but words can give no idea of it to him who has never tasted them. There is a fragrance in a rose, which, while the nerves perceive it with complacency, cannot be communicated, in the slightest degree, by language. Such also is the heavenly manna; and he who would form a just notion of its exquisite sweetness, must taste it. No learning, not even the argumentative skill of an Aristotle, can afford him the least idea of it, without actual sensation.

"Were I to define divinity," (fays the admirable author of Select Discourses,) "I should rather call it a divine life, than * a divine science; it being something rather to be understood by a fpiritual sensation, than by any verbal description.

"Divinity is a true efflux from the eternal light, which, like the fun-beams, does not only enlighten, but heat and enliven. The knowledge of divinity that appears in system is but a poor wax-light; but the powerful ENERGY of divine

" knowledge

^{*} Bishop Taylor and Mr. Smith coincide here, not only in sentiment, but expression.

" knowledge displays itself in purified fouls, the true " Πεδιον Αληθειας *.

"To feek our divinity merely in books and writings, is to feek the living among the dead.

"We do but in vain feek God, many times, in

"these, where his truth too often is not so much enshrined as intombed. No; intra te quære

"Deum; feek for God within thine own foul.

"He is best discerned ‡ νουρα επαφη, by an intel-

" lectual feeling. Evri de fuxns aidnois vis, the foul

" itself has a certain feeling.

"The reason why, notwithstanding all our acute reasonings and subtile pursuits, truth prevails no

"more in the world, is, that we so often disjoin truth and goodness, which of themselves can

" never be disunited.

"There is a knowing of the truth as it is in Jesus;
"as it is in a Christ-like nature; as it is in that

" fweet, mild, humble, and loving spirit of Jesus,

"which fpreads itself, like a morning sun, upon the souls of good men, full of light and life.

"There is an inward beauty, life, and loveliness

"in divine truth, which cannot be known, but

"only when it is digested into life and practice.

"Our Saviour, the great master of divine truth,

"would not, while he was here on earth, draw it up into a fystem or body, nor would his disciples

" after him: he would not lay it out to us in any

" canons or articles of belief, not being so careful

"to stock and enrich the world with opinions, as with true piety, and a godlike pattern of purity,

"as the best way to thrive in all spiritual under-

^{*} The foil in which TRUTH grows and flourishes.

⁺ Plotinus.

"flanding. His main scope was to promote a holy "life, as the best and most compendious way to a "right belief. He hangs all true acquaintance "with divinity upon the doing God's will. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. This is that alone which will make us, as St. Peter tells us, that we shall not be barren nor unstruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

"There is an inward fweetness and deliciousness in divine truth, which no sensual mind can taste, or relish. The fuginess amp, the natural man favours not the things of God. Corrupt passions and terrene affections are apt, of their own nature, to disturb all serene thoughts, to precipitate our judgments, and warp our understandings. It was a good maxim of the old fandings. It was a good maxim of the old lewish writers, that the Holy Spirit * dwells not in earthly passions. Divinity is not so well persice ceived by a subtile wit, wower and not never as by pure sensation."

"He that will find truth, must seek it with a free judgment, and a SANCTIFIED mind: he that thus seeks, shall find: he shall live in truth, and truth shall live in him: it shall be like a stream of living waters issuing out of his own soul: he shall drink of the waters of his own cistern, and he shall every morning find this heavenly manna lying upon his soul, and be seed with it to eternal life. He will find satisfaction within, feeling himself in conjunction

"דוח חקרש לא שדה בעצב רלא בכעש" *

The Ruach Hakkodesh, or Spirit of Holiness, dwells not with turbulent and angry tempers.

with truth, though all the world should DIS-

Thus the heart of a good man will experience the most pleasurable sensations, when he finds, and find it he will, the pearl of great price, the living energetic gospel, lodged, by divine grace, in the fanctuary of his bosom. He will be filled with all joy in believing; and thus EXPERIENCING the efficacy of the Christian religion, he can entertain no doubt of its truth, its divine original. The real difficulties and obscurities of the scriptures give him little trouble, much less the cavils of fceptics. He has the witness in himself*, that the gospel is the word of God, the incorruptible feed + of holiness, and such felicity as the world never gave, and cannot take away. He cannot adequately describe his ‡ state. It is an UNSPEAKABLE gift. He feels it; and is grateful.

The excellent Norris, after having spent many years in the usual studies of academics, in logic, metaphysics, and other, what he calls, unconcerning curiosities, comes to the following resolution:

"I think," fays he, "I shall now chiefly apply "myself to the reading of such books as are "rather persuasive than instructive; such as are "sapid, pathetic, and divinely relishing; such as "warm, kindle, and enlarge the interior, and "awaken the divine sense (or feeling) of the soul;

^{*} I John, v. 10. † 1 Pet. i. 23,

[†] THOMAS A KEMPIS thus attempts to describe the happy state, impersectly indeed, but devoutly: " Frequens " Christi vistiatio cum homine interno, dulcis sermocinatio, grata consolatio, multa pax," &c.

"as confidering with myfelf, that I have now, after so much reading and speculation, more need of HEAT than of light. Though if I were for more light still, I think this would prove the best method of illumination; and when all is done, the love of God is the best light of the soul. For I consider with the excellent CARDINAL BONA, that a man may have knowledge without love; but he that loves, although he wants sciences, humanly acquired, yet he will know more than human wisdom can teach him, because he has that master within him, who teaches man knowledge *."

If other students and teachers were to follow his example in this instance, there would be much more true devotion and sincere piety in the world; and sew would be insidels, except among the desperately profligate, who harden their hearts, and cloud their understandings by habitual vice and intemperance; who fear Christianity should be true, and therefore, with fool-hardy presumption, resolve to deny it.

* Via Compend. ad Deum.

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SECTION XXXI.

On the Seafons of Grace.

THERE are times when the mind feems fensible of a peculiar ferenity; the understanding is clear to discern spiritual things, and the heart glows with sentiments of Christian piety and general benevolence. At those times, man appears to be exalted above the common level of mortality. All pure, all peace, all love, all joy, his nature endeavours to soar above the earth, and to reach the source of all excellence. A sweet complacency, in those moments, dissuffes itself over the soul, and an internal satisfaction is experienced, which no language can describe: but which renders him who feels it as happy as it is possible to become in a sublunary existence.

These are the halcyon times which may be termed the seasons of grace; the seasons, when the God of mercy, compassionating the weary pilgrim, sends down the cup of comfort to exhilarate and reward him; displays the lamp of heaven, to illuminate his path as he travels in the valley.

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These favours, as I firmly believe, are offered to all the sons of Adam who do not presumptuously and repeatedly and knowingly offend the donor; for that man may grieve the Spirit and quench the Spirit, we are told in the strong language of scripture.

But a proper reception of this divine benefit will fecure its frequency and continuance. Our own endeavours must be exerted with vigilance and constancy, to preserve the divine frame of mind which it may have produced. Nothing can effect

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this but the avoidance of habitual vice and impurity, and the practice of virtue. But if, after all, there should be seasons of insensibility and coldness, it must not be concluded that the spiritual assistance is withdrawn in displeasure. For even in the darkest valley, an unseen hand can support and guide the pilgrim in his progress; and after the clouds shall have prevailed their time, the sun will break forth with all its warmth and lustre.

It appears to me to be the first object of Christian Philosophy to secure the duration and frequent recurrence of the seasons of grace. In order to accomplish this end, whatever conduces to the moral improvement of the heart must be pursued with ardour. The sine morality, discovered by the light of nature and the seelings of the heart, probably assisted, among the heathens, by divine interposition, may and ought to be called in to add something to the work of Christian improvement; for the best heathen ethics are founded on truth, and therefore immutably valuable. A state of grace without morality, I simply believe, is not permitted by him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

But the man who is bleffed with the vifitations of the divine Spirit, feels his heart spontaneously inclined to every thing that is lovely and of good report. Virtue appears to him amiable, and easy to be practised; and vice disgustful, at once the pollution and the misery of his nature. All the angry passions subside in him; the gentle and benevolent affections grow in their place, and man becomes what he was before the lapse of Adam, and what the gospel revelation was designed to render him, a being little lower than the angels.

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SECTION XXXII.

Of mistaking the Effects of Imagination for the Season's of Grace.

THERE are many who will scarcely allow the existence of any thing which they cannot subject to the notice of the senses. They must literally see the truth of every thing which requires their assent, or they will doubt its reality. To them, whatever is said on the subject of a spiritual world, or an invisible agency on the soul of man, appears to be the essuance of sancy, and the sick man's dream.

And indeed the experience of mankind justifies great caution in distinguishing between the actual operation of the Holy Spirit, and the delirious effects of a too lively imagination, which heated by the devotional slame, has often kindled a destructive fire. It is indeed the parent of fanaticism, in all its extremities, and evil consequences. As, therefore, the real agency of the Holy Spirit is to be invited and cherished, so the mere imagination of it is to be most studiously avoided.

That the whole doctrine is not imaginary, is evident to him who reads and believes the gospel. Such operations are there plainly spoken of and promised as the greatest blessings to the human race. Their effects are described as great and sudden, in affording both comfort, holiness, and illumination.

The reality of feafons of grace cannot be questioned but by him who at the same time questions the whole system of revelation. And a rational

rational man, it is to be believed, will find no difficulty in fatisfying himself that he is not deluded by his imagination, when he feels himself particularly virtuous, pure, benevolent, and open to celestial influence.

But as all men are not governed by reason, and none are governed by it uniformly, it certainly is probable that the delusions of imagination may often be mistaken for supernatural affistance. A few cautionary suggestions on the subject may not,

therefore, be superfluous.

Since it is possible that the best-intentioned may be-thus deluded, let every man try his spirit by the fruits it produces; not by a sudden or momentary fruit, but by the frequency of its productions. If it habitually produces peace, joy, purity, piety, and benevolence, let no man attribute it to his imagination; but give the glory to God, and be grateful.

But if it display itself in pride, self conceit, and contempt of others, in acts of violence, in disturbing good order, in any behaviour which seems to argue an opinion of peculiar inspiration from heaven, of a partial commission, delegated to reform the world by irregular, uncharitable, and offensive interposition; if it pretends to visions and illuminations unexperienced by the best and wisest of men; if it assumes the privilege of actually conversing in person with Jesus Christ, and talks of the hour and moment when the Holy Ghost rushed upon the bosom; it is time to beware of the infatuation of a deluded fancy. There is certainly every reason to believe that such a temper of mind is not from God.

But it is folly and impiety to confound with these that sweet frame and disposition of mind, which the scriptures describe descending from the Holy Ghost, and which has indeed every mark of divine origin.

He who condemns the doctrine of divine agency on the mind of man as, FANCIFUL, must, if he is consistent, include the whole of the Christian religion, and all that has ever been said or written in favour of it, under the same imputation. According to him, the sair edifice must melt away, like a palace of ice, when the sun of reason shines upon it. But we maintain that the true gospel, which is indeed the doctrine of grace, is the ROCK of ages.

SECTION XXXIII.

Of Seasons of Desertion, or supposed Absence of the Spirit.

THERE are seasons in the lives of good men, when their sense of spiritual things is comparatively dull; and many, at these times, have been alarmed with an idea of being totally deserted by the Spirit, and have fallen into a state of despondency. But if there were no other proof that the grace of God is still vouchsafed to them, their uneasiness alone would evince it. While pain is felt, the surgeon apprehends not a mortification.

But the alarm, it may be prefumed, is, to the pious Christian, unnecessary. For it is certain that the visitations of the Holy Spirit are sometimes more fensible than at others; and that when they are not fensible at all, its guidance and benign protection may continue unaltered. light fometimes shines with a bright and strong effulgence, to guide us into the right way; but while we are proceeding in it fafely and regularly, and without an inclination to deviate, or immediate danger of falling, the rays may be emitted less powerfully, because less necessary. The moment there appears danger of wandering or of stumbling, the lamp is ready to shine with instantaneous radiance. Thus an infant, just beginning to walk, is guided by the parent's eye, and encouraged by the parent's voice, and yet it is often permitted to go alone, without affistance or encouragement, in order to exercise its strength, and to give it a

due degree of confidence. But the tender mother may still hold the leading-string unobserved by the infant, and, at the very first lapse, save the fall. The sun, though obscured by clouds, affords both light and warmth, guides mankind in all their operations, and supports both animal and vegetative life.

The mistaken opinion that ecstasy and rapture are always necessary to evince the presence of the Holy Spirit, has brought the doctrine into discredit among the sober and rational, and introduced much misery among the ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful. The sober and rational neither experienced such ardour without intermission, nor did they believe the nature of man, as he is now constituted, capable of supporting it. The ignorant, the weak, and the fanciful, endeavouring to raise themselves to a height which they could either not reach or not maintain, sell from disappointment to dejection, and from dejection to despair.

In truth, the influence of the Spirit rushes not like a continual torrent, but flows as a gentle river, which, indeed, for the most part, displays its filver surface in the meadows, but may sometimes conceal itself, without being lost, in a subteranean channel.

While we retain faith, hope, and charity, and while we feek the favour of God in fervent prayer, we have every reason to believe that GRACE abounds in us, though we should not, for a considerable time, be favoured with the livelier experience of its immediate energy. If we persevere in a virtuous course, we may rest assured that God will, at all proper intervals, and for our

reward and encouragement, shew us the light of his countenance.

Let the pious Christian remember, that HOPE is placed, in the celebrated enumeration of Christian virtues, next to faith, and before charity. Let him, therefore, take care not to indulge the least tendency to fuch melancholy ideas of defertion as may lead to despair. God will not behold a fincerely contrite heart, anxious to find grace, without affording it; and though, for wife purposes of trial, it is possible that he may not, for a short time, bestow it in its more fensible influences, yet there is every reason to believe, that he who fincerely grieves because he thinks himself less favoured by the Holy Spirit than usual, is, on that very account, in a STATE OF GRACE, and therefore fafe. The second Spanish bly average

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SECTION XXXIV.

Of the Doctrine that the Operations of the Holy Spirit are NEVER distinguishable from the Operations of our own Minds.

Ingenious and philosophical divines, desirous of discouraging, to the utmost of their power, all fanciful pretensions to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, have boldly affirmed that its influence is not to be distinguished from the ordinary operations of the human mind. Their endeavour to prevent the evils of a wild imagination deserves praise; but they should be cautious of misrepresenting the effects of divine agency, and denying truth, with a design of obviating error.

From the plain and repeated accounts of scripture, it appears that this divine agency produces a very great alteration in the mind; a much greater than could be produced by its own natural operations. It is God that worketh in you, faithful St. Paul, both to will and to do of his good pleafure*.

I speak with the utmost dissidence, when I say that it appears probable that such powerful energy is fometimes distinguishable from the spontaneous operations of the mind. I am sensible that the doctrine may open a door to fanatical extravagance; but if it is the true doctrine, it ought to be maintained, whatever may be the consequences.

The influence of the Holy Ghost is represented in scripture as consolatory. When a good man, in deep affliction, seels, in consequence of his prayer and devotion, a spring of comfort flowing upon his mind, such as no reasoning of his own, no external circumstances, no condolence of his friends could produce, is there not reason to believe that the influence of God's Holy Spirit is upon him, and that it is distinguishable from his own thoughts and imagination? The operations of his own mind lead only to horror and dismay; but a light rises up in the darkness; and is it not easy to perceive that this unexpected radiance is the day spring from on high?

When the pious Christian, employed in fervent prayer, finds himself full of holy joy and humble considence, and feels his heart melt within him, overslowing with love of God and charity to man, is there not more presumption in attributing this state to the mere operations of his own mind, than to the God of spirits, actually dispensing that grace or favour which he has promised, in the gospel, to the faithful?

When temptations to fin affault with violence, and a man feels himself strengthened, so as to be able to overcome, at the very moment of his intended surrender, shall he erect the victorious trophies to his own virtue? His own reason and resolution had betrayed him, the operations of his own unaffisted mind tended to concession; but God gave him strength from his holy place, and to God only is due the praise.

Innumerable are the circumstances and situations in life, in which comfort, illuminations, protection, and strength are afforded in a degree and manner, which it is much more unreasonable to think could be produced by the mere operations of the mind, than that they were supplied by the author and giver of all good.

In making the distinction between the operations of the Holy Spirit and those of the human mind, the wisest men will ever be obnoxious to mistake. The weak, wicked, and hypocritical may deceive themselves or others in it, to the injury or offence of many. But still the inconveniences of this perversion cannot entirely justify divines in their considential and repeated affertions, that since the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, such as were bestowed on the apostles, have ceased, the operations of the Holy Ghost on the mind are in no instance or degree to be distinguished from its own operations. These affertions approach nearly to an entire denial of the doctrine: a very dangerous and impious blasphemy*.

" Nam si tota Dei actio consistit in clara evangelii propositione, opportune focta, cur omnipotentia ad id requiritur? Quorsum adbibentur a PAULO magnifica illa voces, ad describendam, quam exerit Deus in nobis, omnipotentiam, Eph-i-18, 19-quam dicitesse υπερβαλλον μεγεθος δυναμεως et κατα την ενεργείαν του πρατους της ισχυος.—Το affert that the power of God working in us, differs not perceptibly from the ordinary power of man.—" Annon boc est actionem omnipotentem Dei obscurare et in nibilum serme redigere?

It may be here asked, What man can judge infallibly of that which passes in the mind of another? Yet many RATIONAL divines dogmatically declare to their disciples, that it is impossible, in any circumstances, to distinguish the energy of God's grace on their hearts from the common and natural workings of the passions and imagination. This is to assume a power of discernment which belongs to him only, to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hidden."

SECTION XXXV.

Of devotional Feelings or SENTIMENTS.

THE pious devotee has exposed himself to the derision of the scorner, by talking of spiritual feelings which he could not accurately describe; and the reality of which can never be proved by external testimony.

But I know not why the word feeling, which, in this age, is applied to all occasions, should not be applied to religion. The lover, artist, the connoisseur enlarge upon the acuteness of their feelings in the contemplation of the excellence they admire. The man of delicacy is for ever boafting of his fine feelings, and the beautiful embarrassment which they create. The spectator in a theatre, the hearer at a concert, expatiates on the effect which the spectacle and the music have produced on his feelings; and shall not he who contemplates the universe, and adores the maker of it, and of those powers by which he both adores and contemplates, shall not he be allowed to feel; and when his bosom glows with love, gratitude, and devotion, shall his pretensions to feelings be stigmatized as the delirious language of a wild enthusiasm?

The frigid temper of scholastic theology would deny the reality of every thing which, from its own defect of sensibility, it never yet experienced.

That the divine Spirit, operating on the mind, should cause in it a SERENITY, a tranquility, a comfort, which no words can express, is highly credible:

credible; when a thousand inferior agents, or causes, are able to produce emotions of various kinds; gentle or violent, painful or pleafing. But well-meaning divines, endeavouring to explode those extravagant pretentions to feeling, which have deluded the vulgar, disturbed fociety, and driven many to madness, have denied the possibility of fuch sentiments, and attributed them entirely to the force of fancy, to folly, and to hypocrify. They deserved praise for their endeavour to prevent evil; but by exceeding the bounds of truth in their censure, they prevented good at the fame time. For their doctrines unintentionally: taught men to neglect the benign seasons of grace, and to confound the holy affiftance of heaven with the mere operations of the human mind. They allow that the scripture plainly speaks of heavenly influence; but they boldly affert, that it can NEVER be distinguished from the ordinary actings. of natural fentiment, intellect, passion, and imagination.

The word feelings, in religion, has been treated with fuch contempt and ridicule, that the truth is in danger of fuffering, without a fair examination. Such is the force of words and preposfession. But let the word be changed to the synonymous term, sentiment, and then let any one object, with solid argument, to giving the name of religious sentiment to that pious, virtuous, pure state of mind, which is cansed by the influence of the Holy Ghost, in the happy hour when God, in his mercy, showers it down, more abundantly than usual, on the human bosom.

But, on this topic, great caution is required; for men, especially the ignorant and passionate,

are prone to attribute their own dreams and emotions to demoniacal or celeftial impressions. Such a persuassion leads to spiritual pride*, to a perseverance in error and vice, to cruelty, and to persecution. He who is acquainted with ecclessastical history, will recollect many dreadful examples of false feelings, and pretended inspiration. The deluded and deluding persons have represented hemselves as prophets, new Messiahs, and even as God; and what is more extraordinary, they have persuaded many to believe them, and have conducted a willing multitude to whatever mischies their zealous hearts erroneously conceived.

While, therefore, a conviction that there is indeed a religious SENTIMENT, or a divine and holy feeling, which impresses the heart more forcibly than any argument, induces me to maintain so important a truth; I must, in the most anxious and importunate terms, express my desire that none may teach, and none submit to be taught, a belief, at this period, in EXTRAORDINARY inspiration.

All spiritual pride, all cruelty, all persecution, are, in their nature, repugnant to the Spirit of grace: and though they probably proceed from strong feelings, they are feelings arising from passion, sancy, and actual insanity. Whoever is under their insluence, must have recourse to the SPIRIT OF GRACE, that his feelings or sentiments may become all gentle, benevolent, peaceable, and

humble.

^{*} False religion is always oftentatious. Its object is to be noticed, admired, revered. When men talk of their feel-ings, there is reason to suspect a vanity, hypocrisy, or knavery. It is justly said, NON EST RELIGIO, UBI OMNIA PATENT.

humble. If his extravagancies still continue to carry him to injurious actions and disorderly behaviour, application must be made to the physician, or, in cases of extremity, the civil magistrate.

There can be nothing in the genuine SENTI-MENT, or feelings, occasioned by the Spirit of God, which is not friendly to man, improving to his nature, and co-operating with all that found philosophy and benignant laws have ever done to advance the happiness of the human race.

SECTION XXXVI.

Of Enthufiasm.

ENTHUSIASM is commonly used and understood in a bad sense; but if its real meaning* be attended to, it may certainly admit of a very fine one. It means a consciousness or persuasion that the Deity is actually present, by an immediate emanation or impulse on the mind of the enthusiast; the reality of which, in certain cases, is the doctrine of the church and of the gospel; a doctrine sufficiently consonant to reason, and not necessarily connected with self-delusion, folly, madness, or fanaticism.

But because many have made pretensions to the privilege of God's immediate presence in their hearts, whose lives and conduct gave reason to suspect that they were not thus favoured, the word enthusiasm, which, in common language, expressed their false pretensions, has fallen into disgrace, and now often implies no more than the idea of a bigot, or a devotee, weakly deluded by the fond visions of a disordered imagination.

But let not enthusiasm of the better kind, a modest considence of being assisted, as the gospel promises, by the agency of the Holy Spirit, be involved in undeserved disgrace. We are taught that

^{*} EN Θ EO Σ .

^{† &}quot; GRATIA IMMEDIATA qualis ab orthodonis docetur, nibil babet commune cum enthusiasmo, sed diversimode ab eo disfert.

that the Divinity resides in the pure heart. The belief of it is indeed enthusiasm, but it is enthusiasm of the noble, the virtuous, the necessary kind. The ardour which it inspires is laudable. Like that of all other good things, the corruption and abuse of it is productive of great evil; but still it is not itself to be exploded.

There is, indeed, a cold philosophy, which seems to discourage all the warm sentiments of affection, and will hardly allow them in any thing which concerns religion. It aims at reducing theology to a scholastic science, and would willingly descant of the love of God, and the sublimest discoveries of the gospel, in the same frigidity of temper as it would explain the metaphysics of Aristotle. But there is a natural and laudable ardour in the mind of man, whenever it contem-

- "I. Enthusiasmus novas quærit Revelationes extra verbum;

 "sed GRATIA IMMEDIATA nullas, quia verbum semper comitatur, nee aliud agit, quam ut illud menti imprimat-
- "2. In enthusiasmo, objecta quæ menti imprimuntur non extrin"secùs adveniunt, sed intus a Spiritu per arcanas inspirationes suggeruntur. Sed bic objectum supponitur semper extrinsecus advenireet ex verbo peti.
- "3. Enthusiasmus sit per subitos motus, qui insum discursum et ratiocinationem antevertunt, et sepe excludunt. Sed Spiritus ope- ratio non excludit, sed secum trabit ratiocinationem et gratum voluntatis consensum.
- "Denique, ne plura discrimina jam persequamur, enthusiasmus in non infert cordis mutationem; et mentem afficit, IMMUTATA if sepe manente VOLUNTATE; unde in IMPIOS etiam cadit, ut in Balaamo et aliis visum; sed operatio gratic mecessario infert cordis mutationem et sanctitatis studium,"

CURRETIN.

This author here speaks of enthusiasm in its vulgar sense which is certainly a DISEASE; a mental FEVER, attended with delirium, plates magnificent objects; and which is certainly to be expected, when that object is the Lord God omnipotent, and the human foul, the particle of Deity, aspiring at re-union with the Supreme Being, and meditating on immortality.

Is there not an ardour of enthufiasm which admires and produces excellence in the arts of music, painting, and poetry? And shall it be allowed in the humble province of imitative skill, and exploded in contemplating the GREAT ARCHE-TYPE of all; the fource of life, beauty, order, grandeur, and fublimity? Shall I hear a fymphony, or behold a picture, a statue, or a fine prospect, with rapture, and at the same time confider God, who made the object and the fense that perceives it, with the frigid indifference of abstracted philosophy? Shall I meditate on heaven, hell, death, and judgment, with all the coolness with which a lawyer draws a formal instrument, an arithmetician computes a fum, or a logician forms a fyllogifm in mood and figure?

Such coolness, on such subjects, arises not from superiority of wisdom, but from pride and vain philosophy, from acquired callosty or natural insensibility of temper. God has bestowed on man a liveliness of sancy, and a warmth of affection, as well as an accuracy and acuteness of reason and intellect; he has bestowed a HEART vibrating with the tender chords of love and pity, as well as a brain furnished with sibres adapted to subtile disquisition.

The scriptures afford many examples of a laudable and natural enthusiasm. My heart was hot within me, says David, and the warm poetry of the psalms, the rapturous style of prophecy, are proofs that those who have been fingularly favoured by

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God were of tempers which the modern philosophers would call enthusiastical. Their fire was kindled at the altar. St. John was a burning and a shining light. St. Paul was avowedly of an ardent temper, and a glowing imagination; nor did our Saviour himself express his sentiments in the cold language of the Aristotelian school, but with emphasis and pathos.

They who rail at enthusiasm, in general terms, and without making a due distinction between the scriptural and the salse kind, consist either of those who laudably endeavour to discredit the pretensions of the hypocrite, and the weak brother; or of those who, from their speculative habits, their cold tempers, or irreligious lives, labour to discountenance all pretensions to an excellence and purity, which they never felt, and to which they could not rise.

Whoever believes what the scriptures indisputably affirm, that the body is the TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, and that he actually resides in it, when it is purished sufficiently for his reception, is so far an enthusiast; but let him glory in the appellation, for he is such an one as every Christian, who thinks and feels in conformity to the gospel he professes, must be of necessity. If he denies the agency of the Spirit of God on the soul of man, he denies the most important doctrine of revelation, and must be a stranger to its sinest effects on the human bosom.

But fince such is the case, let those who very laudably write against enthusiasm * of the false kind,

^{*} There is an old faying, "Give a dog an ill name, and "they'll hang him." Thus also, give the doctrine of grace,

kind, take care not to confound truth with falsehood; and not to proceed to such an extreme in refuting the pretensions of hypocrites, fools, or knaves, as to infringe on the genuine and sublime doctrine of grace, the glory of the everlasting gospel.

grace, though plainly EVANGELICAL, the name of EN-THUSIASM OF METHODISM, and a very great part of mankind will immediately explode it, without the flightest examination.

The name of methodist has been given to all the clergy, who preach or profess the doctrines of the reformation, as expressed in the articles, homilies, and the liturgy of the church, to which they have solemnly assented, in the prefence of God and man-

SECTION XXXVII.

Cautions concerning Enthusiasm.

So many and so melancholy are the effects of mistaken and excessive enthusiasm, recorded in the annals of mankind, that wise men are justly alarmed at every appearance of it, and little inclined to give it indulgence.

Whatever there has been of favage cruelty, whatever of public violence, and tumult, and confusion, the utmost extremes of all these evils, in all their consequences, have been equalled by the frantic extravagance of false enthusiasm. It has exhibited, in some tempers, all the symptoms of a malignant disease, and terminated, at last, in real and most deplorable infanity.

If then it be wisdom to obviate the approaches of distemper, those men have evinced themselves wise, who have laboured to discourage, by all the arts of ridicule and argument, the earliest tendencies among the people to religious phrenzy. There are innocent follies, and there is a madness, which is only the object of compassion; but the folly and madness of the bigot are detestable, because they are destructive as a pestilence. Against such an enemy to human happiness, philosophy has urged her best reason, justice has unsheathed her sword, and the stage, to complete the triumph, has played all the batteries of derision.

But argumentation, coercive force, and even ridicule, have been found ineffectual. All these

are classed, by the bigot, under the term persecution, and persecution, like a current of air, adds violence to fire. The gentler, the kinder the more Christian mode of expostulation and rational concession, wherever concession can be made, may, like a balsamic vulnerary, heal the fore which opposition would cause to rankle.

I therefore do not deny the justice of the enthusiast's pretensions, who professes himself actuated by a belief that the Holy Spirit condescends to assist him in virtuous endeavours, by a secret instuence from Heaven. But I caution him against entertaining, for a moment, the presumptuous idea, that the same Spirit which assists him, does not, with equal readiness and efficacy, assist his pious neighbour also, and all sincere believers, throughout Christendom, however distinguished by sect, church, or persuasion.

I urge him to try his Spirit by the infallible touchstone of scripture. Is it pure, is it peaceable, is it gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality, and without hypocrify*? If it should be deficient in any of these amiable qualities, let him be cautious of indulging it, lest the Spirit should be of a diabolical, and not of a heavenly nature.

And in what manner is he to form a judgment of himself, since the heart is deceitful; and to know oneself is the most difficult of sciences? If his high pretensions are accompanied with a bad life; if he be disposed to contend with rancour and violence in support of his pretentisions; if he decry good works; and if, with every appearance

^{*} James, iii, 17.

of fanctity, and many external acts of piety and benevolence, he referves to himself some fecret and favourite vice, he may rest assured, that the Spirit which actuates him is not from above.

If he be inclined to neglect, despise, and revile decent and useful ordinances, such as are countenanced by scripture, and have a direct tendency to preserve peace, benevolence, and piety; if he presers himself to all regular and learned ministers, whether in the establishment or out of it, and preaches to ignorant and deluded multitudes in the sields, with the air and voice of phrenzy, he may have just reason to fear, though he should have ten thousand in his train, that he has carried his pretensions to the Spirit beyond that wisdom, moderation, and love of order, which the author of our religion taught, both by precept and example.

If, in his writings, he applies the scriptural language to himself, and assumes the authority of a primitive apostle; if, at the same time, he expresses his ideas in such a manner as to excite the laughter and contempt of men of sense and approved goodness, he may infer that his spiritual pride has hurried him to the verge of infanity; and, as he values his health and happiness, should exert himself to remove the sebrile symptoms, which are at once contagious and satal.

When mechanics, of confined education, and not remarkable for natural discernment, or peculiar virtue and goodness, think themselves better able to instruct the people, than a numerous class of their fellow-citizens, who have been separated, from their youth, for sacred offices, instructed in learning of various kinds, versed in the original languages of scripture, the very idea implies so

great a degree of pride and felf-conceit, hat it cannot come from the gentle, unaffuming spirit of him who was himself meek and lowly, and who every where taught his disciples the lesson of humility.

If such persons urge, in desence of their extravagant behaviour, their dereliction of their trades and daily labours, and their assumption of the priest's office, a particular CALL, from Heaven itself, louder than reaches the ears of others, let them before they believe themselves, or persuade others, produce, as a credential of their commission, a miracle. If they find themselves utterly unable to do this, let them return to the workshop and warehouse, renounce the deceitful spirit, and evince their attainment of the true, by humility, charity, modesty, and obedience to lawful superiors; by a study to be quiet, and an attention to their own business.

From such practices, and such persons as I have alluded to, has arisen much of the disgrace which has fallen on true and laudable enthusias, or that wisdom which is insused into the pure, gentle, and charitable heart from above. False enthusias sim should be discouraged, that true religion may grow and slourish; as the weed should be plucked up, to give room for the wholesome plant to strike root, and expand itself in soliage and blossoms, and produce good fruit in abundance.

SECTION XXXVIII.

Of being RIGHTEOUS overmuch.

It seems to be very doubtful, whether the scriptural phrase of being righteous overmuch, signifies that sort of excess which methodists and fanatics are apt to indulge. I am rather induced to believe, that it means an extreme rigour in exacting from others an unerring rectitude. "Be not righteous "overmuch; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?"*

That is, "Establish not, by thy severity, a rule "so strict as must, if put in force against thyself, "involve thee, impersect as thou art, in destruction." The prohibition seems to me to quadrate with the old observation, that justice in the extreme is extreme injustice †.

There are other interpretations of the words at least as probable as that which confines it to the over-sanctity of the methodist or bigot.

The ingenious and pious Dr. Trapp has taken the words in the latter sense, and written, with great force of argument, against the extravagances of methodism. Perhaps the words of his text did not properly authorize him in deriving the doctrine from them which he has laid down; but whether they did or not, I think he had reason on his side, when he endeavoured to explode all superstitious excesses which are subversive of true religion, injurious to society, and painful to the deluded individual.

Philosophers, by the light of nature, discovered, in the earliest ages, the wisdom of avoiding

^{*} Eccles. vii. 16. + Summum jus, summa injuria.

extremes; and no precepts are more common than those which recommend the golden mediocrity. These were undoubtedly suggested by actual experience, and a careful study of the human constitution. If they are just and proper, when applied to philosophy, there is every reason to think them equally so, when applied to religion, which is the perfection of philosophy. Excess, in the very name, implies culpability, even when the things in which it appears are of a virtuous and laudable nature.

So that whoever advances his virtues beyond the line of rectitude, errs no less than he who stops, at an equal interval, on this side of it. Yet, at the same time, I must observe, that there is something far more noble and generous in errors of excess than of defect; and the virulence which has been shewn in resuting the poor methodist, who has been tormenting himself with supershous austerities, seems to me to arise from a want of good-nature and charity, far more criminal than the mistaken discipline of a zealous devotee.

That part of the methodists who are fincere in their rigid self-denial, and in all the active and passive virtues of their persuasion, are certainly objects of kindness and compassion, rather than of severe animadversion.

The church, and the protestant dissenters, it appears, teach the doctrine of grace; a doctrine which, I believe, the methodists consider as of the first moment; and for the sake of attending to which with more earnestness, they seeded from the church and meeting-house to the tabernacle. Their preachers, they found, were used to dwell upon that subject, more than any others; and

with

with a degree of vehemence not usual or approved by men of more learning, moderation, and humility. They were caught by the sound, and taught to hate both the church and all regular ministers with a hatred truly unchristian. The church and the ministers did not preach the gospel in its purity; and neither its doctrine nor its discipline were sufficiently strict and severe.

The dissemination of such ideas may answer the ends of self-appointed leaders, who wish to increase their importance, by drawing a multitude after them. Accusation will generally be heard with attention. Pretension to superior holiness is one of the most successful means of deceit. The multitude are attracted by these, and a thousand other arts, co-operating with the natural tendency which they feel to superstition and fanaticism. They become self-tormentors; lose most of the comforts, and neglect many of the duties of life.

In the church, their favourite doctrine of grace ought to be inculcated in the manner which both reason, scripture, and experience best approve; for the doctrine of grace is most fully declared to be the doctrine of the church of England; and if the ministers are reluctant to preach it in all its force, it is from a fear of falling into the fin and difgrace of over-much righteousness. It is the humble endeayour of my treatife on this subject, to stimulate preachers to enlarge on the doctrine of grace; and by those means to bring back the numerous sheep who have strayed from their flock. There is the fort of food in which the sheep will shew that they delight, if the shepherds will but bring it forth; and indeed there is little doubt but that most of them do, on some occasions; but if the

sheep hunger and thirst after more than they receive, the good shepherd will not fail to open all the stores with which the scriptures abundantly

fupply him.

With respect to doctrine, the over-righteous Christian, as he is now called, will thus have no cause to complain of defect in the church; and with respect to moral discipline, it is very certain that self-denial, mortification, fasting, active beneficence, and all Christian perfection, is taught by the church and her ministers, with great force of argument and authority. Every Christian may carry the moral discipline of his religion to whatever lengths his conscience or inclination may urge him.

It must be confessed, that such is the moderation of the church and her pastors in the PRESENT AGE. that the duties which they teach are not urged with that unnatural rigour which precludes the rational enjoyment of life. It is a cheerful church, and for that reason the more estimable. It requires no excessive austerity. It aims at affisting poor erring mortals in overcoming their weakness and mifery; but it does not add to them, by requiring the facrifice of health, ease, peace, fociety, cheerfulness, and innocent gaiety. It does not condemn those, with whom it cannot agree in opinion, with uncharitable severity. It is gentle and candid; it is accommodated to fuch a creature as man, for ever aiming at good, but, from weakness, continually relapfing into some degree of evil. It does not, like the fevere fystem of the over-righteous, inflame and aggravate the wounds of its patients,

but, with lenient balfamics, affuages their anguish*.

And if the over-righteous object that regularlybred ministers want vehemence and earnestness, I affirm that the objection cannot be univerfally wellfounded. Men, having various degrees of talents, and various degrees of fenfibility, will have a corresponding variety in their modes of delivery. The lively by nature, with very little fense of religion, may be animated in their discourses; the dull by nature, with a meaning very honest and pious, will be poor orators. And it always happens, in a very large body of men, that some are idle and irreligious; though circumstances may have led them to assume a profession where carelessness and impiety are doubly culpable. But such is the present state of human nature. He who demands more perfection than experience has ever yet known, is unreasonable and over-righteous. If fome men have less pretension, and less vehemence than those who are called the OVER-RIGHTEOUS. they have probably less hypocrify, less folly, and less spiritual arrogance. Over-righteousness, with all its pretenfions to humility, is the parent as well as the child of pride.

After all, let us remember that there is an under-righteousness (if I may use the term) as well as an over-righteousness; and that mankind are much apter to err from desect than excess. While hypocrify and fanaticism are avoided, let us not, in the present times, be alarmed at danger from excessive piety.

^{*} By the Church I wish to be understood all those who are united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, wherever they dwell, and by whatever denomination they are distinguished. The World, in the scriptural sense, consists of all who are not so united.

SECTION XXXIX.

All extravagant and felfish Pretensions to the Spirit to be anxiously avoided, as they proceed from and cherish Pride, and are frequently accompanied with Immorality.

Ostentatiously to pretend to greater portions of the Spirit than others, is alone a very unfavourable fymptom, as it is a prefumptive proof of two wants, not compatible with the Spirit's benignant influence: the want of humility, and the want of charity. It is no wonder, therefore, that those who have made such pretensions, have disgraced them by the wickedness of their lives; and have induced ill-judging men hastily to consider the whole doctrine of divine assistance as a mere delusion.

pearance of extraordinary piety was conducive to advancement in wealth and honours, were fure to go farther in their pretentions, than the modelty of true professors could permit or excuse: but that deceitfulness of heart which produces hypocrify, leads to all other bad conduct; and religion has been disgraced by the singular profligacy of ostentatious professors.

Knaves of the very worst kind, who have no other object than to avail themselves of the credulity of others, are likely at all times to put on a cloak and a mask, which may render them externally respectable, and facilitate their purposes of deceit. Nothing seduces the ignorant and unexperienced

perienced so easily as the appearance of extraordinary fanctity; and nothing has been more frequently assumed, for the accomplishment of ambitious and lucrative designs. When these designs have been accomplished, the cloak and the mask have been thrown aside, as useless incumbrances, and the villain has stood forth in his proper shape and colour.

Men of weak heads and warm hearts have proceeded to the most extravagant lengths in pretenfions to fanctity; and at the same time, from the
want of solid virtue, have fallen into deplorable
fins. Their fins derived additional deformity in
the eyes of the people, from the contrast of affumed fanctity; and the world was ready to exclaim that all religion must be vain, if, in men
who display so much of it, it contributes so little
to wisdom and virtue.

Great finners, unwilling to tread the rugged road of virtue, have thought it an easier and pleasanter mode of avoiding the consequences of their enormities, to persuade themselves of sudden conversions, and peculiar favour from heaven; and to compensate for in ward impurity by outward fanctity, and for disobedience in things essential, by intemperate zeal in things indifferent, formal, and merely oftentatious.

Thus spiritual pride, want of charity, hypocrify, knavery, folly, and extreme wickedness; have given rise to extraordinary pretensions to the Spirit, and verified the observation, that the wickedest of mankind have been among those who displayed the appearance of goodness and piety in the EXTREME.

"The gradation has been," (fays Dr. Trapp,)
"righteous overmuch in practice—righteous over"much in practice and doctrine—immoral and
"profligate in both; and this still with pretentions
"to extraordinary measures of the Holy Spirit."

But to what should a conviction of this truth lead the sober Christian? Certainly not to deny the doctrine of supernatural assistance, which he finds in the gospel; but to avoid all extravagance of pretension, all boasting, all over-righteousness, all preference of himself to others, on account of spiritual gifts, less he also should find himself deceived and a deceiver.

The religion of Christ is of a retired and referved nature. Its most important transactions are in the recesses of the heart, and in the closet. It loves not noise nor oftentation. Let him, therefore, who wishes to know whether he really has the Spirit, examine whether his virtues and good dispositions abound in retirement, and without the least parade whatever, or the smallest applause or reward of men. If he does good privately, and avoids the eyes of admirers. I think he may entertain an humble confidence that he has the favour of God. He has, in consequence, a source of joy within him, which no man taketh away. He has the bread of life, and feeds on it in his heart by faith with thanksgiving. He is filently and unoftentatiously happy, neither courting the notice of the world, nor regarding its unjust censure. He is particularly careful, that no ill-treatment shall cause him to violate the law of charity. His chief concern is to hear and yet forbear; to be rather than to feem good.

SECTION XL.

Affected Sanctity, Demureness, Canting, Sourness, Censoriousness, ignorant and illiterate Preaching, no Marks of a State of Grace, but contribute to bring the whole Doctrine of Divine Energy into Contempt, and to diffuse Insidelity.

Religion is lovely. Her voice is melodious, and her aspect delightful. How has she been deformed! She has been taught to utter jargon with the hoarse croaking of the portentous raven, or to scream with the terrific howlings of the bird of night. Her sace has been changed from the sace of an angel to a gorgon's head, surrounded with snakes. She has been rendered a bugbear, terrifying all who approach her, instead of a gentle nursing mother, inviting wretched mortals to her sostering bosom, by the tenderest blandishments of maternal love.

Men of natural fense, improved by a learned education, and polished by all the elegancies of cultivated life, have turned from her, thus disguised as she appears, with disgust and horror. They have devoted themselves to a seducing philosophy, and lest religion thus dissigured, to the gross vulgar, who they erroneously conceived were naturally attached to the horrors of a cruel and gloomy, as well as a filly, superstition.

Is it not desirable to vindicate Christianity from such dishonour? to shew that her most important doctrine, the doctrine of divine energy, leads to every disposition that is gentle, amiable, and beneficent; that it exalts, refines, and mollisses the human bosom; and while it kindles a lively and pleasant hope of future felicity, improves every

real enjoyment of the present life? Such a reprefentation, and it certainly is a just one, must invite every man, who seels duly for himself or others,

within the Christian pale.

The Spirit is a spirit of truth, and therefore most be adverse to all affectation of fanctity, all fludied severity of aspect and demeanour, intended only to excite external respect, and to impress on the spectators, often for the sake of interest, as well as from vanity, an idea of spiritual preeminence. The Spirit is a loving spirit, and therefore very unlike that of the four, censorious pretenders, who condemnall innocent amusements, and think none capable of divine favour but themfelves, and those who entertain their fentiments on points perfectly indifferent in the fight of God, and of every reasonable man. The Spirit is a spirit of wifdom, which implies a due degree of knowledge and ability for every undertaking we voluntarily engage in, and therefore cannot approve the preaching of illiterate persons, who are unacquainted, not only with the languages in which the scriptures were written, but often with their own; who are fitter to be catechumens than catechists; to fit at the feet of Gamaliel, than to usurp his chair. Learning may not be requifite in the pious hearer, but is certainly fo in every one who assumes the office of an instructor. He is not an honest man, who professes and is paid to instruct others, without having exerted himfelf to the utmost to procure a competent store of knowledge. The operations of the Holy Spirit, accompanying his endeavours, may make a good Christian in his private capacity; may give him faith and knowledge sufficient for his salvation; but they do not,

fince the time of the apostles, bestow a knowledge of languages, or qualify ALONE, without the aids of human learning, for a TEACHER of theology.

The annals of fuicide, if any fuch there were, and the registers of Bedlam, might bear witness to the mischiefs caused by fanatical mechanics, with ftrong passions and imaginations, but of feeble and narrow intellects, wildly haranguing weak and aged men and women on their loft state, on their danger of eternal damnation, and a thousand other most awful matters, which at once puzzle the understandings, and difmay the hearts of the deluded multitude. True Christianity shudders at the fufferings of well meaning devotees, wantonly inflicted by ignorant zealots, feeking felfimportance, and gratifying the pride of their hearts, as leaders of a wretched tribe, whom noise and high pretentions collect easily in every populous city, and in every poor neighbourhood, where the necessity of constant manual employment for the means of subsistence precludes all contemplation, and the improvement of judgment that might refult from it.

In compassion to these people, who deserve every assistance, because they certainly intend every thing that is good, though they do and suffer great evil, through desect of judgment, I wish the regular clergy, both of the established and dissenting church, to feed them with the food in which they delight—the heavenly manna, the doctrine of grace. There is no doubt but that many of them do so occasionally; but I submit it to them whether it ought not to be a leading and principal topic in every discourse inculcating morality. I beg leave to suggest that

evangelical preaching, in which the doctrine of divine energy must always make a very considerable part, would keep their congregations from wandering after men, who have no other qualification for preaching but zeal, real or pretended; zeal without knowledge, or a knowledge confined, superficial, and unaccompanied with general charity or found discretion. With all their defects, they do, however, preach the doctrine of grace. The people know this to be the genuine doctrine of the gospel, and therefore they slock by tens of thousands to hear it, regardless of the barbarism of the self-appointed orator, who leaves the loom and the last for the pulpit.

The pearl of great price they estimate highly, however rudely it may be fet; but how much more would they prize it, if it were fet, adequately to its immense value, in the purest gold, by the hand of a master? If men of found and extensive learning, of true tafte and eloquence, were to recommend it, with all the beauties of proper language, the fieldpreacher would rant in folitude, and the tabernacle would be as empty as most of the parish churches in London. To them I refer the inquirer, who wishes to know how little the most decent and studied discourses on morality, or practical religion, avail to attract the people. Let him leave a while: his books and library, and read the volume of real life. We have had enough of words, enough of systems, enough of controversy; let us study and teach what is really and efficiently useful to the mass of the people, what improves human nature, renders life as comfortable as the condition of humanity will admit, and opens a pleasing prospect, (when life must be relinquished,) beyond the grave.

SEC.

SECTION XLI.

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Bishop Lavington's Opinion, respecting the Extravagancies and Follies of fanatical Preachers, and Pretenders to the Spirit.

THEREVER I find great stress laid upon some imaginary, infignificant, or unintelligible " peculiarities; the word of God turned into a con-" juring-book; the divine ordinances either lightly " esteemed, or imputed to the devil; good works " either undervalued or trodden under foot; wild-" fire dangerously toffed about, instead of that light which came down from heaven; puffing pretenof fions to extraordinary revelations, infpirations, " usurping the name of the Holy One; with per-" fonal conferences with God, face to face; enthu-" aftic ranters, comparing themselves with prophets " and apostles, if not with Christ himself; the most wild and extravagant behaviour, the phrenzies of " a disturbed brain, or deluded imagination, the " effects of fits, of a weak head, or DISEASED BO-" DY, all turned into fo many tests and marks of " faintship; the SPIRIT OF PRIDE AND VANITY " possessing the LEADERS; a spirit of ENVY, RAN-" coun, broils, and implacable animofities, dashing " each other in pieces; a spirit of bitterness and un-" charitableness towards the REST OF MANKIND; 2 4 progress through immorality, scepticism, infidelity, " atheifm, through spiritual desertions, DESPAIR, " and MADNESS, made the gate of perfection; an 46 IMAGINARY new-birth to be brought to pals by " means

" means of REAL TORTURES, of some of the most " exquisite pangs and sufferings that can affect " human nature ;- I fay, where these are found, " and many more equally horrible, one may eafily " discern a wide difference between fuch a dispensa-" tion and GENUINE RELIGION; as well as the " bungling hands that are substituting the former " in the place of the other. One may eafily fee " what strangers such inconsistent ramblers must be " to the true devotion, as well as the COMFORTS of " a sedate, composed piety; to a firm belief of our "Maker and Redeemer, and a constant reliance " upon Providence; to a fleady courle of fincere, of habitual, and unaffected religion; to the cherishing of a warm love of God in the heart, and welltempered zeal for the truths of his inspired word; " and all this PROVED by the love of our neighbour; " to a general observance and attendance on the " MEANS OF GRACE, and a well-grounded hope of " glory."

From the wretched follies of fanatics, the mind turns with complacency to the gentle benignant Spirit which guided a bishop Wilson, a Watts, a Doddridge, a Nelson, and a Horne. Such men do honour to the doctrine of grace, and rescue it from the contempt under which it has fallen through the extravagance of weak devotees, and the unbappy ingenuity of scholastic theologists, explaining away, to shew their skill, the strongest expressions of holy scripture.

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SECTION XLII.

Pride the great Obstacle to the general Reception of the Gospel of Grace.

PROUD, turbulent, and vindictive spirit is utterly incompatible with the spirit of Christianity; but a proud, turbulent, and vindictive spirit constitutes what is called, in the world, a man of honour; and who can aspire at the distinctions and rewards which the world has to bestow, without aspiring at the character of a man of honour-without zealously maintaining it, in defiance of all which the scriptures have taught us to consider as the WILL or gop? No wonder, then, that the genuine gofpel, the Spirit, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and eafy to be entreated, should be utterly neglected by those who are more folicitous about the opinion of a few weak and wicked mortals like themselves, than about all that Christianity promises or threatens; who regard neither God nor man, when their own felf-estimation is in the smallest degree depreciated. Submission of the temper and understanding, which is necessary for the reception of that EVIDENCE of Christianity which the Holy Ghost affords, is considered as contemptible meanness, by those who are full of themselves, and live only to flatter, for the fake of being re-flattered, in the circles of felf-idolizing vanity.

The doctrine of a participation with the divine nature, conceded by Heaven to the faithful and pious of low degree, is highly mortifying to those who

who think the perfection of human nature confifts in civil nobility, in blood, or in titles conferred by an earthly monarch. He who shares the divine nature, who is favoured with an emanation of Deity, is truly ennobled; for his very nature is exalted above the ordinary rank of humanity; and according to the gospel, he is become the living temple of the Holy Ghost. That a poor man, such as were the apostles, and such as are many true Christians in the present day, should possess a nature raised above whatever earthly honours can bestow, is a doctrine offensive to all who have been taught to consider, as the chief good of man, the gratification of the pride of life.

Scholars also, deep mathematicians, metaphysicians, and logicians, feel a sentiment of scorn, when they are told that a plain, simple, humble peasant, whose mind is rightly disposed, may receive a portion of divine illumination, which shall contribute more to sound wisdom, and consequently to happiness, than all their minute and laborious disquisitions. Philosophy, towering, like Icarus, on wings made by the art of man, to the clouds, looks down with contempt on Religion, who associates with ignorant wretches, distinguished by humility of rank as much as by humility of disposition. Philosophy leaves the company of a personage so mean, and frequently passes from a contempt of her, to downright hatred and enmity*.

Thus

^{*} The gentile or genteel philosopher too often hears with pain such sentiments of Christianity, as those of Erasmus in the following passage:

[&]quot;Exissimo puram illam Christi PHILOSOPHIAM non aliunde su felicius hauriri quam ex evangelicis libris, quam en apostolicis sulla sul

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Thus pride is a chief obstacle to the reception of the doctrine of evangelical grace. Pride blinds the eyes of the understanding against the evidence of the Holy Ghoft. Pride causes hardness of heart, a quality the most odious to the divine, and most injurious to the human nature. It teaches us to behold our inferiors, not only as not of the fame flesh and blood with ourselves; not only as little entitled to the comforts and advantages of this life; but as unworthy of partaking with us in the divine favour, and the happiness of a glorified state. The doctrine of grace is confidered by the men of the world as too great a leveller, to be freely admitted confistently with their own ideas of exclusive privileges, or of worldly policyt. It must therefore be cried down, wherever their authority can prevailt.

But furely their objection does it honour. It shews that the doctrine is favourable to the whole human race; that it is not narrow, partial, unjust; but, like the Author of all good, whence it flows, accepts not the persons of men, neither regards the transient and petty distinctions of rank, but shews

[&]quot; literis; in quibus, si quis PIR philosophetur, ORANS magis quam ARGUMENTANS, nibil esse, quod ad bominis felicitatem,

[&]quot; nibil quod ad ullam bujus vitæ functionem pertineat, quod in bis non fit traditum, discussum, et absolutum." ERASMUS.

[†] Yet they should remember, that death is a greater leveller, and one whom no policy or power can escape.

[‡] How can ye BELIEVE, which receive bonour one of another? John v. 44.

Men lean on reeds, when they rely folely on each other for happiness and honour. Indeed, what real honour can one poor lost creature receive from another, who is exactly in the same condition, if without GRACE?

Whatforver ye do, do all to the GLORY of God. 1 Cor. 10.

favour to the meek and lowly, and to all that are good and true of heart, whether in the palace or in the cottage.

Take comfort, ye poor and despised brethren; for God, by his gospel, has promised to bestow on you riches and honours, durable as they are solid, and such as no earthly power can confer or alienate: and would to Heaven that they, who trust in worldly niches and honours, could but behold it in a true light, their real poverty and dishonourable state, when destitute of grace, or, in other words, the favour of the Almighty Sovereign, the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings*.

* Nesoit religio nostra personas accipere, nes conditiones bominum, sed animos inspicit singulorum. Servum ac nobilem de moribus pronunciat. Sola apud Deum libertas est non servire poceatis. Summo apud Deum est nobilitas clarum esse virtutibus.

Hieronymus ad Celantiam, Ep. 14.

Ευγενεια δε, η της εικονος τηρησις, ή προς το αρχετυπεν. εξομοιωσις, ην εργαζεται λογος ή αρετη.

GREG. NAZ. in Orat. 11.

Ευγειών δε γελώ, ου χων οτ πογγοι νοιτίζουσιν, απαλε.

πλη, μη επαερεια Χαβακ μείζει η τεομος, η ω μεος το μέστος

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SECTION XLIII.

The universal Prevalence of the Holy Spirit—the Genuine Grace of the Gospel—highly conducive to the Happiness of CIVIL SOCIETY, as well as of Individuals.

It always appeared to me an absurdity, that men should act in their corporate capacity on such principles as, in their individual and private state, they would deem profligate. Public acts are the acts of private men; and wherever public acts are immoral, it may be concluded, that those who sanction them in a body, are, as separate members, infincere friends of virtue, and hypocritical professors of religion. Offensive war, and treacherous violation of the most solemn treaties, could never be countenanced by whole nations of Christians, if the individuals were actuated by the sentiments of true Christianity.

It has been said, that we are not to look for the effects of Christianity in national acts or public councils. Why not? are they not men and Christians, who perform national acts, and compose public councils? When a man gives a vote for any public measure, or advises the supreme magistrate, does he drop the Christian in the voter or the counsellor? Common sense revolts at the idea of the same men's renouncing their identity, splitting themselves into several characters, and acting in one inconsistently with their most serious duties and solemn engagements in another, which, at the same time, they profess zealously

zealously to support. Misery unutterable arises to the human race, from this duplicity. The sanctity assumed in one character throws a salse glare and varnish over the villainy practised in the other, and makes it pass current by authority.

A man who is a real Christian, not a political conformist only, will be a Christian in his public conduct, as well as in his private. He will be a Christian statesman and member of parliament, no less than a Christian states, husband and neighbour.

Now, no man is a Christian in name only, when his Christianity arises from the operation and evidence of the Holy Ghost. His very heart is converted. The whole man is renewed. He is no longer a proud, selfish, cruel being, greedily seeking his own fancied gratification, at the expence of other men's happiness, but guided in all his conduct by the sentiment of love. The law of kindness governs all his actions. His wisdom is gentle; and he uses power, if he possesses, in diffusing blessings to all who are within the sphere of his influence.

Suppose, then, kings, and rulers of all descriptons, under the benign operation of the Christian spirit, and consequently sirm believers and desenders of Christianity. Unnecessary wars immediately cease. The prophecies of Isaiah are accomplished. Swords and spears are converted into pruninghooks and plough-shares. The lion dandles the lamb, without an inclination to devour it.

The people, feeling the bleffings of fuch government, and actuated by the gentle affections of charity, become cordially attached to it, and whole fociety, both the governed and governing, co-operate in adding to the comforts and diminishing the evils of life; piety to God, and love to man, display the vital efficacy of the gospel, and prove that it is not a cunningly devised fable, invented by priests for the support of kingly power, but the lively energy of God, actuating the human bosom, and restoring man to that perfection of nature by the second Adam, which was lost by the disobedience of the first in Paradise.

The truest patriotism, therefore, is to revive or diffuse genuine Christianity; to teach men to seek and to find the grace of God through Christ Jesus. This is the philosophy which should be taught from the chairs of our universities, and the pulpits of our churches. It would not then fall to the illiterate and fanciful mechanic, who often disgraces it, not only by ignorance of all other science, but too often by a violence of passion and malignity of temper, which seem to evince that he does not possess what he so warmly recommends to his audience.

Christianity is so far from unsitting man for society, as the calumniators have said, that its graces and virtues are peculiarly social. It teaches every thing that is just and kind. It is the false, mistaken, hypocritical, and, above all, the political Christianity, which has been the cause of mischief and misery. This has ever been used as a cloak for maliciousness. But where the Spirit of God, the living gospel of immediate grace, goes hand in hand with the written gospel, there every thing lovely, friendly, and beneficial, is the natural and unavoidable result. The root is good,

and the fruit delicious and falubrious in the higheft degree. May the tree fpread its umbrageous branches over the land, and all the people take refuge and feek folace under its expanded foliage! The throne that is established in righteousness is fixed on the rock of ages; and the people who have the Lord for their God and King, shall never know the woes of captivity and desolation.

Christian philosophy purifies society by purifying the fountain of all human actions, the heart of man. Heathen philosophy often consisted of nothing more than fine sayings, pleasing to the imagination, but leaving the heart uninfluenced and the conduct unreformed.

Some of those heathens, who wrote the finest morality, it is well known, practised, and even obliquely recommended with all the charms of wit and eloquence, vices which degrade man below the brute. is

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SECTION XLIV.

Of Holiness-its true Meaning, and absolute Necessity.

ET a man's mind be holy, and he will not d doubt one moment of the truth of Christianity. It is not enough to be learned or fagacious; it must be holy; and then the more learned or the more fagacious, fo much the more firmly will its belief be fixed, and fo much the better enabled to extend the faith. Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Newton, Milton, Addison, Lord Chief Justice Hale, poffessed intellects as vigorous as ever fell to the lot of human beings; but they were educated pioufly as well as learnedly, according to the manners of their times. They lived holily; the Spirit of Grace took early possession of their hearts, and they became not only believers but defenders of the faith. Not to their learning, but to their holiness, be the glory. They faw God by the eye of faith, not of philosophy.

There is one qualification, without which we shall never be admitted to the favour of God, or to celestial felicity in the mansions of suture glory, and it is HOLINESS:

Without this, we read, no man shall see the Lord. Follow peace with all men, and HOLINESS, without which, no man shall see the Lord*.

No words can be plainer, and more express than these. A question naturally arises in the mind of every thinking man, in what consists this quality, which is indispensably necessary to securing the

^{*} Heb. xii. 14.

beatific privilege of enjoying the divine prefence? What is holiness?

The excellent Joseph Mede informs us, that "fanctity, or holiness, imports discrimination,—or distinction from other things by way of exaltation and pre-eminence"*.

God himself is originally, absolutely, and effentially HOLY; man, only by communication.

Holiness I therefore understand to be that state, in which God vouchsafes to man his HOLY SPIRIT, and discriminates him from those who, rejecting his offers of grace, presumptuously adhere to the world and its vanities; who neglect religion entirely, and who live without God in the world, despisers of his grace. To be holy, is to be refined, by the Spirit of God, from the corruptions of the world; to be separated from fin and impurity, like the metal from the base alloy.

He, therefore, who would fee the Lord, must, by obedience, seek the manifestation of the Spirit, by prayer obtain the divine assistance, and thus be admitted to a participation of the divine nature: according as his DIVINE POWER hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given unto us exceeding great and

^{*} Thus Kimchi,

[&]quot; קרוש שבת לחבדילי משאר חימי םי

[&]quot;To fanctify the fabbath, is to separate it from other days."

[&]quot; כי כו כל לשיו קרושח הףא עניו הכרלו מאחר במעלרה

[&]quot;Because all words of fanctity import a thing feparated from other things by way of pre-eminence or excellency."

JOSEPH MEDL.

precious promifes, that by thefe we might be PAR-TAKERS OF THE DIVINE NATURE, having efcaped the CORRUPTION that is in the world through lust*.

The happy state of holiness constitutes the true dignity of human nature. This at once purifies and elevates it. The man who possesses it, enjoys this world with calm complacency, while he rises superior to it, and hopes for a better in reversion. He acts rightly, yet never rigidly, he always tempers justice with kindness and mercy; his whole behaviour is gentle, slowing from an internal principle of benevolence. The fear of God and the love of man operate on his heart as the main springs of all his activity. To express his conduct in scripture language, he does justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God.

Behaviour thus amiable and beneficent is the furest proof of holiness. Great pretensions, sanctimonious deportment, a rigid observance of external ceremonies, and a pertinacious adherence to particular doctrines, are all consistent with an unholy state, with self-deceit, and with hypocrify. But he who is kindly affectioned to his fellow-creatures with brotherly love; he who is unostentatiously pious, and displays the fruits of the Spirit by good works, he can entertain little doubt of SEEING GOD; seeing the truth of his word, and enjoying his presence in the living temple of his heart, thus consecrated by the influence of the Holy Ghost.

A delightful ferenity attends that state of holines, which arises from an humble considence in

^{* 2} Pet. i. 4.

God; fuch as would render it devoutly to be wished for, if its consequences extended only to the pleasurable enjoyment of this life. It causes our journey to resemble a passage though those charming countries, where the air is genially soft, the sky clear, and the prospect variegated with every beauty of nature. The cold, shivering, self-dependent mortal, who walks through the world all solitary, who has not God for his friend and companion, may be compared to the forlorn savage, prowling for prey far from the solar beam, in the regions near the pole. How would he rejoice in the warm sunshine and sweet serenity of an Italian climate!

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SECTION XLIV.

Of a good Heart.

The most desirable treasure which a human being can posses, whether he has regard to his own happiness or to those around him, is a good heart. In every situation, and under all circumstances, this will furnish a store of sweets which the wicked cannot obtain; and delicious though it is, would not relish, so vitiated is their taste. A good heart communicates liberally the pleasures it enjoys; blessed or blessing in every emotion.

But what constitutes a good heart? The grace of God operating upon it. The mild, gentle, healing spirit of the gospel; or, to use the language of scripture, the unction of the Holy Ghost, mollifying its hardness, and preserving it from corruption*. This it is which forms a good heart, and

^{*} Beautiful is the description which Lactantius gives of the effect of Christianity in meliorating the disposition. I will transcribe his words:

[&]quot;Da mibi virum, qui sit iracundus, maledicus, esfranatus:

paucissimis Dei yerbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem: jam tibi eum liberalem dabo et pecuniam suam plenis manibus largientem. Da crudelem & sanguinis
ai appetentem; jam in veram elementiam furor ille mutabitur. Da
injustum, insipientem, poccatorem: continuò et aquus & prudens
is innocens erit. Uno enim Lavacro malitia omnis abolebiturai santa divina sapientia vis est; ut in bominis pectus dissaai sa, matrem delictorum, stuttitiam, uno semel impetu expellat; ad
au quod essiendum, non mercede, non libris, non lucubrationibus opus

and a good heart is a land of Canaan to itself, a land flowing with milk and honey.

All the irafcible passions are, in their excess, diabolical. They are fruitful fources of mifery. They would unparadife the garden of Eden, and turn the chearful light of Heaven into gloomy darkness, like the shadow in the valley of death. There is in the world much natural evil; there are pains, and difeases enough, to wean the heart from the immoderate love of it; but none of them are productive of wretchedness so great and difficult of cure as the malignant passions of pride, envy and revenge. These estrange man from man, and convert the haunts of human creatures into dens of foxes and wolves. Cheats, calumniators, robbers, murderers, in all their variety and degrees of flagitiousness, are characters naturally flowing from their hearts unfoftened, unenlightened, unhallowed by the Spirit of Grace.

But behold the Christian. Gentleness and sweetness beam from his eyes, and illumine his countenance with a mild lustre. Good humour predominates in all his demeanour. He has no concealed rage rankling in his bosom; he has no sinister and selfish views, under a studied openness of countenance. He converses with a generous frankness. His bosom is transparent. You are perfectly safe with him. He will serve you, if possible,

es est. Gratis ista fiunt, facile, cito; modo pateant aures et PECTUS

[&]quot; præstitit aut præstare potuit?"

LACT. Infl. Lib. ii. C. 26.

Thus appears the superiority of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY, in a moral view, over all other philosophy. Lactantius had been a heathen philosopher, and speaks experimentally.

as well as please you; but he will never injure you purposely, or give you the smallest pain. He feels complacency in all the good he sees around him, and delights in augmenting it. His treasure is within him. His interest is in Heaven. His ambition is for objects above the world; so that nothing in it is of value enough, in his estimation, to tempt him to resign the tranquillity of innocence, to renounce the pleasures of a friendly and benevolent disposition. He has all the ingenuous simplicity of the infantine age, and you delight in him, as in the harmless babe, who sports around you, and expresses his pains and pleasures according to the dictates of uncorrupted nature.

Such is man, when his natural afperities are fmoothed, and his inborn bitterness sweetened by the benign operation of celestial influence. Compared with the mere natural man, he is an angel. Is it not defirable thus to raife human nature, and thus to improve fociety; thus to render the earthly existence almost an anticipation of what our imperfect imaginations picture of the heavenly? Heathen philosophy cannot effect it. Heathen philosophy is confined to a few, in comparison with the myriads that compose the great mass of human beings; who weary themfelves in pursuit of happiness on this terraqueous The experiment has been tried by the philosophers of all ages, and failed. religion can effect it. Yet what religion? A religion founded on historical faith, and heathen mythology? No; it must be a vital religion -a divine influence on the heart, which is plainly promifed and announced in the glad tidings of the gospel. This is the true euangelion, or GOOD NEWS*, to the human race. It is authenticated by the written gospel, and there is a witness within us which renders it unquestionable. Happy they who have obeyed the voice which commands, faying, "My son, give me thy "HEART†"! When the heart is devoted to Christ, the understanding will make no resistance to his doctrines, but humbly acknowledge the most inexplicable mysteries to be above, yet not contrary to reason.

What NEWS was it to mankind to tell them what Pythagoras, Socrates, Epictetus, Cicero, and many others, had told them before—the expediency of moral virtue, justice, temperance, fortitude? The glad tidings were the announcing the comfort and affiftance of the Holy Ghost, redemption, pardon, peace, and the refurrection. This was an evangelion, or acceptable message brought from heaven by him who had the spirit without Measure. (John, iii. 34.)

Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharises, ye shall in No Case enter into the kingdom of beaven. Matth. v. 20. But the righteousness (or morality) of the heathens was that of the Scribes and Pharisees. It was the righteousness of the law, not of the gospel.

† Proverbs, xxiii. 26.

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SECTION XLV.

On the Superior Morality of the Christian Philosophy.

The operation of divine grace being no other than the melioration of our hearts, the purifying of the very fountain of our actions, it must of necessity lead to the practice of virtue, or, in the language of scripture, to good works. It is a gross calumny to say that the true doctrine of grace is unfavourable to morality. It inevitably produces every thing that is lovely and useful in social intercourse. The Holy Spirit's residence in the heart is inconsistent with vice and malevolence. It requires, indispensably, both personal purity and social love: and they who endeavour to obtain it, must begin and persevere in the practice of every moral virtue.

The love of God and mankind are the two main springs which actuate every Christian, who

is regenerated by grace.

The love of God was not enforced by heather philosophy. The love of man was indeed frequently, though feebly, recommended; but at the fame time, many dispositions of mind were held honourable, and worthy of cultivation, which are often inconsistent with the love of man. Such are valour in war, revenge, love of glory, and of conquest.

The love of God must have the most favourable influence on moral conduct; for no obedience is so perfect as that which arises from affection. It is the alert, cordial, fincere obedience of a dutiful child to a tender parent. It anticipates his will, and is desirous, in its honest zeal to please, of going even beyond the line prescribed by parental authority.

And what is the love of God, but the love of goodness, purity, rectitude? Love not only admires, but endeavours to imitate, the object of its affection. The love of God, therefore, produces a conduct as godlike as the condition of infirm humanity can admit. Hence St. John says, very strongly and truly, "This is the Love of God, that we keep "his commandments*." It is a natural and unavoidable consequence of loving the supreme perfection, that we imitate the qualities in which it consists—purity, justice, mercy, every thing that we can conceive of permanent goodness and beauty. Such is the first hinge of Christian morality.

And the second resembles it, in its benign effects on human nature, and the state of society.

It is the love of our fellow-creature; not merely friendship, which is often founded only on petty interest and mutual amusement; but universal philanthropy, extending even to enemies. Every man under the operation of this liberal affection, is considered and cherished as a friend and neighbour. We are taught to love them as ourselves, and to do to them as we wish they should do to us.

This extensive law of love is peculiar to our lawgiver, the blessed Jesus. He calls it a new commandment. He makes it the distinguishing characteristic
of the gospel. He proposes his own example, to
ensorce obedience to it. "This is my command"ment," says he, "that ye love one another as I
"have loved yout."

But neither the love of God nor the love of man will exist in our hearts, in a due degree of ardour or fincerity, without the divine influence. The matural man loves the world and himself too well, to admit, whatever he may pretend or profess, affections so liberal, sublime, and disinterested. He loves Mammon more than God; and as for the love of his sellow-creatures, he wears a salse appearance of it, a studied politeness, courteousness, and affability, for the sake of availing himself of their affistance in gratifying avarice, ambition, and the love of pleasure; but he hates, envies, or utterly neglects, all who contribute neither to his fordid gain, nor to his personal gratification. Grace alone can soften and liberalize his contracted bosom. Grace alone can render him sincerely, secretly, and impartially virtuous; and the best Christian is the best member of civil society.

Let him who doubts the excellence of Christian morality, read our Saviour's fermon on the mount, with the discourses formed upon it by Blair*, Blackall, and other great divines of the English church. He will be struck with its pre-eminent beauty and utility. Indeed the whole body of English sermons sounded on the gospel, exhibits a system of morality which the world never saw before, and which would never have existed without the evangelical code. I earnestly recommend to general perusal Bishop Gastrell's little book, intitled, Christian Institutes.

^{*} James Blair, M. A. President of William and Mary College in America.

SECTION XLVI.

The true Genius and Spirit of Christianity productive of a certain Tenderness of Conscience, or Feeling of Rectitude, more favourable to right Conduct, than any Deductions of unassisted Reason, or heather Morality.

A man, rightly disposed by the influence of genuine Christianity, becomes a law unto himself, in all circumstances and situations. A present temper, superinduced by divine energy on the heart, produces right conduct, just as a tree grafted with a kindly scion, brings forth sruit both delicious and salutary, under the natural operation of showers and sunshine.

A true Christian has constantly impressed upon his mind a sense of God's presence, and a conviction that he is responsible to his Father in heaven for all his conduct. This keeps him in awe, mixed with love. He sears to do wrong, not with a service sear, but an affectionate reverence for his all-powerful friend, who has shewn him great savour, and at the same time required, in return for it, obedience to his injunctions, as a condition of its continuance. He loves God from his heart; an affection, which comprehends in it the love of every thing that is good in moral conduct, every thing pure and holy in his own person, every thing beneficent to society.

The residence of the Holy Ghost in the Christian's heart increases his moral sensibility. He sees

fees with greater acutencis the good and beautiful" in behaviour; he feels with additional vivacity the emotions of benevolence. It gives him pain, it does violence to his very nature, thus sub-limed, to act basely, unjustly, unkindly. He knows that the divine principle within him will not inhabit a polluted shrine; but will take offence; and depart, if the temple be profaned by immorality.

Casuistry, or long and abstructe reasonings on the moral sitness or unsituess of actions, are totally unnecessary to the man whom the heavenly teacher has instructed. His determinations admit not of such cold delay or doubtful hesitation. His heart turns, like the needle to the pole, with tremulous, yet certain propensity, to the point of rectitude. From the infirmity of human nature, and the violence of temptation, he may decline a little to the right or to the left; but the attraction to Heaven and virtue still acts upon and prevents his total aberration. Touched by heaven, he acquires a kind of polarity, which causes him to point thither without any inclination to deviate.

Hence he is above the schools of the heathen, moralists. He displays that superiority which Jesus Christ justly claims over Socrates. Yet he may enjoy the beautiful compositions of the ancients, if his education has enabled him to understand them. He may be pleased and instructed with their fine observations on life and manners, and the great advances they have made

^{*} Калонауавы.

Res delicata eft Dei Spiritus.

in ethics, by the light of nature. But though he may derive great benefit from them, though he may be both informed and advised by them, yet he sees them defective, and finds that they are not absolutely necessary to accomplish the Christian, who, by the written word of scripture, accompanied by the Spirit's ministration, becomes sufficiently enlightened for the practice of the purest morality, and wise unto salvation. By Christian philosophy, he experiences not only illumination, but affistance: he is taught the way that he should go, and led by the hand in his journey.

I conclude, then, from this tender sensibility to right and wrong, and this propensity to kindness, which the supernatural agency of the Spirit causes in the heart, that true Christianity, such as is sounded on the vital instuence of the Spirit, makes the best moralists, the most useful and worthiest members of society. And as Christian philosophy is attainable by ALL, and not confined to the rich or learned, it appears to me, that even politicians, who consider the prosperity and peace of nations, would evince the highest wisdom, in first cultivating it themselves, and then encouraging it, by all prudent modes, among the people.

When a whole community shall become, by the preaching of evangelical doctrines, and the example of the great, subject to the power of conscience, warmed with the love of God, and all mankind, "just and good, true and sincere, "meek, humble, tender-hearted, and compassion on the content, temperate, pure, and heavenly- minded, then will men become each a law to "himself,"

"himself," and all civil government will be greatly facilitated, while the general happiness is secured without wars and sightings, without tumult and discord, without capital punishments, without any of that severe coercion, which creates partial evil for the sake of general security.

Such a state, it will be said, is chimerical and Utopian. I fear, in the present corruptions of Christianity, it may be visionary. But every approach to it is desirable, as it is an approach to the happiness and persection to which man is formed to aspire; and therefore, it will be hove all those who possess power, not for fordid purposes, but the general good, to hasten and extend the reign of grace. They should say with heart as well as voice, THY KINGDOM COME.

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SECTION XLVII.

The great advantage of Christian Philosophy being taught by a commanding Authority.

When mere men teach, they submit their lessons to the judgment of their hearers, who usually assume the office of critics, while they appear in the character of disciples. They will learn only what pleases their taste, or is approved by their judgment. But Jesus Christ, being silled with the Spirit of God, taught with commanding authority. "I and the Father are "one" (says he). "I speak not of myself, but of him that sent me. Whoso keepeth my "sayings, shall not taste of death."

What heathen philosopher ever dared to come forward, as a teacher of mankind, with such weighty words as these? But it will be found, that however a sew among mankind may be disposed to listen to calm reasonings, the great mass is most effectually taught what is fair and what is base, what is useful and what destructive*, by the voice of well-sounded authority.

The scriptures, especially those of the New Testament, have long obtained this authority. We read them, not as we read any other book, of the wisest of mortals; not as judges, empowered to condemn or approve; but as pupils or dependents listen to the commands of an acknowledged master,

[&]quot;Quid ht pulcbrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non."

whom they, at the same time, love and sear; and whose commands, they are sensible, are for their good, however disagreeable the duty which they prescribe. We consult them as an oracle. But we do not so consult the dialogues of Plato, or the Manual of Epictetus.

"There are," (fays the author of the Light of Nature pursued,) " many excellent sentiments of God " and morality interspersed in the writings of the " antients: but those writings are studied by few, " and read chiefly for curiofity and amusement, " regarded as ingenious compositions, shewing a " fagacity and justness of thought in the authors. "They may make fome impression in the reading, " which quickly dies away again, upon laying the " book aside; as Tully tells was his case, with " refpect to Plato upon the immortality of the " foul, whereas the Testament is the first book " we are taught to read, to receive as the oracle " of God, containing the way to falvation, which, at our utmost PERIL, we must not difregard, " and the truth whereof it is a fin to doubt: "therefore, whatever is drawn thence, comes accompanied with a reverence, and idea of " high importance, which give a force to the " impression. Let a man take for his thesis the to floical maxim, Things out of our power are nothing to us, and descant upon the imprudence of so-" licitude and anxiety for future events, which " we can no ways prevent or provide against, it " will not work the effects which the very fame " discourse might do, pronounced from the PUL-" PIT, upon the text, " Sufficient unto the day is the " evil thereof."

Where

Where is the uninspired philosopher, who can address mankind with the authority of St. Paul? " My freech and my preaching" (fays he to the Corinthians) " is not with enticing words of " man's wisdom, but with demonstration of the " SPIRIT AND POWER, that your faith might not " be in the WISDOM OF MEN, but in the power of " God (accompanying and enforcing my words.) " We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, " even the hidden wisdom, which none of the " princes of this world knew, but which God " hath revaled unto us by his Spirit, the Ta Bath " TOU OLOU, the depths of God. We have received, " not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which " is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which "things also we speak, not in the words which " man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy " Spirit teacheth, explaining the * things of the " Spirit, (the instructions of the Spirit,) in the " language of the Spirit." Again, to the Ephehans he fays, "The mystery of Christ, which " in other ages was not made known to the fons " of men, is now revealed unto his holy apostles " and prophets, by the Spirit!" " For this " cause" (he adds in another place) " thank we "God without ceasing, because, when ye received " the word of God, which ye heard of us, ye " received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in " truth, the word of Gods." He gives also a menacing admonition to those who should despise his directions, as despising not man, but God.

^{*} See Wolf. Cur. Critic. in Loc. and Chapman's Eufebius.

^{† 1} Cor. ii. 4, 5. 7, 8. 10. 12, 13.

Ephef. iii. 5. § 1 Theff. ii. 13.

" HE THAT DESPISETH, DESPISETH NOT MAN,

" BUT GOD, WHO HATH GIVEN UNTO US HIS

" HOLY SPIRIT"."

Such is the commanding authority with which Christianity addresses itself to men, including, in its peculiar doctrines and fublime mysteries, the finest ETHICS, though not systematically delivered, which the world ever faw. Let it be confidered what an advantage it is to have even the best heathen morality inculcated with the fanction of COMMANDMENTS from the all-wife and all-powerful Creator. Such is now the case where Christianity prevails. And would it be wife, even in a political fense, though policy is a very inferior confideration, to fuffer a mode of teaching men to be just and good, thus efficacious, thus firmly and extensively established, to fall into heglect? When will the politicians of the world again obtain fo powerful an engine? What have they to fubflitute, if they break or take away the main fpring of this most efficacious, long-tried machine? I beg leave to apologize for using so degrading a term. I am speaking, in their own language, to the worldly wife, who despife the gospel.

Some universal, authoritative code of moral law is wanted to instruct the MILLION, high and low, rich and poor, with great and certain effect. What teacher, from the schools of philosophy, ancient or modern, if he deprive us of Christianity, can supply the defect? Will he not strive to supply it, but suffer mankind to lapse into ignorance, barbarism, and brutality? He may give us a laboured system. But nothing which the

^{*} I Theff, iv. 8,

most ingenious and learned can invent, however excellent its rules and precepts, can gain the advantage which Christianity already possesses by its AUTHORITY alone. Time, and the concurrence of whole nations, have combined with its own excellence to render it impressive beyond any human system. It is adapted to the poor and unlearned, of which the majority of mankind, in all ages and countries, consist. It speaks to them as a voice from Heaven, and it will be heard.

But its AUTHORITY must be infinitely increased, when men shall be convinced that the written gospel is accompanied at the present hour, and will be to the end of time, with the MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT, the actual operation of the Holy Ghost, vivifying and illuminating the divine principle within us. Christian philosophy is a sun; while all other, to use the poet's language, is, comparatively, but "darkness visible."

Christ taught as one having AUTHORITY. Christ spake as never MAN spake; and they who hear him with faith, will, through the operation of the HOLY GHOST, possess a wisdom and happiness MAN never knew how to bestow, and can never take away.

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SECTION XLVIII.

Morality, or Obedience to the Commandments of God in focial Intercourse and Personal Conduct, remarkably infifted upon in the Cospel.

That most injurious calumny, which asserts that the doctrine of grace is unfavourable to the purest virtue and the most beneficent behaviour in civil society, must be resuted in the mind of every reasonable and impartial man, who attends to the following passages of Scripture:

"He that hath my commandments, and keepet eth them, HE IT IS THAT LOVETH ME. If ye "love me, keep my commandments. If a man " love me, he will keep my words. He that " loveth me not, keepeth not my favings. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh " away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he " purgeth it. Ye are my friends, if ye do what-" foever I command you. If ye continue in my " word, then are ye my disciples indeed. Hereby "do we know that we know him, if we keep "his commandments. Whofo keepeth his word. "in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. Every " man that has his hope in him, purifieth himfelf. " Little children, let no man deceive you: he " that doeth righteoufness is righteous; he that committeth fin is of the devil. Whofoever is born of God, finneth not; who oever doth not "righteousness, is not of God. Pure religion "and undefiled before God and the Father, is " this,

"this—to vifit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world. Be not deceived; neither for nicators, nor idolaters, nor thieves, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*."

It were easy to cite a great many more passages of the same moral importance; but the written Gospel is in the hands of all, and there no one can search, with a sair and candid mind, without sinding the purest virtue ensorced on the strongest motives that can possibly actuate a human creature.

The truth is, that the very same care and caution, the fame virtuous exertions, are necessary to Christians, as if there were no supernatural and auxiliary interpolition. Our endeavours must not be relaxed in the smallest degree. The difference and advantage lies in the refult and effect of our endeavours. Under the divine influence. they will certainly be attended with fuccess. They will promote our happiness infallibly. The CHOICE of our conduct must be voluntary, and the perfeverance and labour must be directed by the purest motives, and the most steady, regular, and careful diligence, just as if we depended upon ourfelves; while, at the same time, they are animated and supported by humble confidence in heavenly favour. No remissings is allowed on our part in confequence of God's favour. We are to work out our falvation with the utmost folicitude. knowing that he who gives us his grace, may,

^{*} John, riv. 15. I John, ii 3. 3, &c. Jam. i. 27.
I Cor. vi. 9. 10. Eph. v. 5, 6.

upon failure of our best endeavours, withdraw it, and leave us in a state of woeful desertion. Libertinism can avail itself of no such doctrines as these, which, in the very first instance, most emphatically recommend purity of heart, the fountain of all external action.

It is remarkable of the gospel, that it teaches obedience to human law, and every moral virtue, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

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SECTION XLIX.

Unbelievers not to be addressed merely with subtle Reasoning, which they always oppose, in its own way, not to be ridiculed, not to be treated with severity, but to be tenderly and affectionately exhorted to prepare their Hearts for the reception of the INWARD WITNESS, and to relume the LIGHT OF LIFE, which they have extinguished, or rendered faint, through Pride, Vice, or total Neglect.

Facts have evinced, that mere human disputation has little effect in converting the infidel. The infidel has often been remarkable for sagacity, and richly furnished with all human learning, though little acquainted with divine knowledge. I never knew any of them retract their errors, after the publication of the most ingenious and laborious books which claimed the honour of completely resuting them. It is time to try another method, since none can be more unsuccessful than that which has hitherto been used. It is time to trust less in human means, and rely on the power of God, which will manifest itself in the hearts of all men who persevere with earnestness in seeking divine illumination.

I deem it extremely imprudent and indecent to ridicule the unbeliever. It is fetting him an example, which he may follow to the great injury of all that is ferious and truly valuable both in morals and religion. It argues a levity and difregard for his happiness, very unbecoming any man who knows the value of a human soul, or who professes a solicitude to fave it alive. Though it cause no conversion, it will produce retaliation.

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Still more unchristian is it to treat him with severity. I have read books professing to recommend the benign religion of Christ, and to resute all objections to it, yet written in the very GALL of BITTERNESS, displaying a pride and malignity of heart which may justly prompt the unbeliever to say, "If your religion, of which you profess to be a believer, and which you describe as teaching charity or benevolence in its sullest extent, can produce no better a specimen than your own temper and disposition, let me preserve my GOOD-NATURE, and you may keep your Christianity, with all the advantages you boast that it contains, in your own exclusive possession."

The late Bishop Warburton treated infidels with a haughty asperity scarcely proper to be shewn to thieves and murderers, or any, the most abandoned, members of society. Many have doubted, from the tenour of his writings, whether he was a believer; or whether he only thought it sufficient, for the sake of rising in the church, to support religion by argument as a state engine. Certain it is, that the spirit which he shews towards his opponents is not the Spirit of Grace; that

^{*} The following is a specimen of the TEMPER with which Bishop Warburton wrote his book on the doctrine of Grace. In the fifth chapter, where he is speaking of the office and operations of the Holy Spirit, he has the following note on Mr. William Law, who, if mistaken, is allowed to have been a sincere Christian, and a very good as well as ingenious man.

[&]quot;This poor man," (fays the great Prelate,) "whether imissed by his fanaticism or his spleen, has here fallen into a trap which his folly laid for his MALICE."

There is then no malice in this observation, no pride, no revenge.

Spirit which is loving, gentle, and eafy to be entreated. His fpirit is fingularly proud and acrimonious; and so has been the spirit of many of his predecessors and successors.

How amiable and gentle, on comparison, the language and sentiments of Voltaire and Rousseau! Those men would have loved Christianity, and probably believed it, if it had not been distorted and dissigured by the passions of angry polemical defenders of it, who shewed their love of Christ, by hating their brother.

Religion is beautiful. Full of grace are her lips. She shall speak for herself to the hearts of unbelievers, and the world:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are " heavy laden, and I will refresh you. I call " you, not for the fake of promoting any worldly "interest, not for political purposes, not for an " ecclefiastical party, not to maintain the riches " or grandeur of any establishment; but that I " may make you happy; that I may dispel the " clouds of trouble and doubt which darken your " paths, and shew you the sunshine of Heaven. "Mine is a spirit of love. I am a lover of "men. I feek to do you good. I bring the "glad tidings of the Gospel; that is, I disclose " to you that God Almighty, in pity to fuffering " and erring mortals, fends a COMFORTER, the "Holy Ghost, descending like a dove, all peacea-" ble, gentle, lovely. I fill you with hope; and "hope is a cheerful passion. It will tranquillize "your agitated bosoms, and lead you rejoicing on " your way to the filent grave, whither you must " go, whether you make your journey to it gay " and pleafant, as you may, under my guidance,

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" or dismally rugged, as it will ever be when I withdraw my lustre."

Would not fuch a mode of address be more likely to conciliate men who oppose themselves while they reject Christianity, than all the angry, taunting language which has been used, not only against professed insidels, but against believers who differed a little, in matters of indifference. South, Bentley, Warburton, and some able writers in recent times, have shewn, in their zealous defences, the pride of pedantry, the sierceness of barbarians, the subtlety of politicians, but quite forgot the gentleness which characterizes the wisdom from heaven, and which alone can win souls by the charms of soft persuasion, assisted by the holy spirit of love.

It is faid of Dr. Johnson, that he used to declare, he loved a good HATER. Many polemical divines have shewn themselves capable of this passion of HATED in its highest perfection. But hatred begets hatred; and Dr. Johnson's declaration is among those inconsistences in his life, which prove a great man still but a man. I am forry that this saying should be recorded of him; for Dr. Johnson professed himself a zealous Christian, and Christ taught us to love even an enemy. According to the Christian rule, an enemy, instead of being hated, is to be melted to love and kindness by good usage.

The odium theologicum, displayed in controversy, is, in my opinion, the greatest opprobrium theologicum. Warburtonian insolence and ill-nature have done more injury to the church, and to the cause of Christianity, than any of the writers whom they were intended to gall and mortify.

SECTION L.

Of the inadequate Idea entertained by many respectable Persons concerning Christianity; with a Suggestion on the Expediency of their considering the true Nature of Christianity.

To abstain from gross, enormous, open, and fcandalous vices, to comply with the outward ceremonies of the Church, and to reciprocate the usual and formal civilities of life, constitutes, in the opinion of multitudes, not only a very refpectable member of fociety, but a very good Chriftian. Concerning the DOCTRINES of Christianity, fuch persons give themselves little concern, but plume themselves on decently practifing the DUTIES; by which they understand nothing more than a very imperfect kind of heathen morality, and the avoidance of fuch conduct as might expose them to the animadversion of law, or to the loss of reputation. The DUTIES of Christianity thus limited, they think easily discernible, without study or reading, by common observation and common sense. Doing as others do, as far as the decorum of established manners allows and prefcribes, is the grand rule. Such persons pass through life with great credit, paying their way, and making themselves agreeable in company, and are feldom mentioned but with the praise of very good fort of people.

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Exactly such fort of people they might have been if *Christianity* had never existed. They hold no opinion, they adopt no practice peculiar to Christianity. Christianity. The Gospel, which they profess to embrace, is a leaden rule, an accommodating guide, an humble companion, that must obsequiously stand on one side, whenever it is in the way of a fashionable practice. Gaming, duelling, and many modes of gratification inconsistent both with the letter and spirit of the Gospel, seem to receive no check from this convenient species of Christianity.

Any thoughts which may occasionally intrude of a very ferious kind, are laughed away by the surrounding circle, as vapours, fancies, the effects of morbid melancholy, or of nervous indisposition. Company, public places, public diversions, are immediately proposed as a sovereign remedy; and indeed they certainly are so far a remedy, that they banish ferious thoughts, but they also banish that happy disposition (for happiness is serious) which might have caused the visitation from on high, and obtained, for the weary sick heart, the sweetly-refreshing cordial of divine grace.

Attendance at polite places of public worship seems to constitute the piety of such persons; and public subscription to fashionable or political contributions shews their charity. It seems fair to infer, that their piety and charity are thus circumscribed, because their actions, on other occasions and at other places, seem inconsistent with piety or charity. Sunday is often employed by them in a manner forbidden both by divine and human laws; and the poor at the next door to their mansions, in some retired village, are often unrelieved, while strangers at a watering place, (where the benefactors names are handed about,)

and advertised objects, receive a very ample share of their public bounty.

All this while they confider themselves as good Christians. God only knows the heart; but if they are mistaken, as is probable, their mistake is a very unhappy one. They are depriving themselves of the benefit of Christianity.

But their mistake probably arises from ignorance. They are indeed very far from ignorant of many things. Their ignorance is chiefly religious ignorance; and it is caused by habitual inattention to the DOCTRINES of Christianity. It is indeed rather difficult to avoid such ignorance, since their time is occupied in what religion calls vanity, and the few hours devoted to reading are chiefly employed in novels, where a truly Christian character would be deemed a perfect solecism.

I humbly hope that the contemplation of Chris-TIAN PHILOSOPHY, thus imperfectly represented in this little volume, may lead them to study it in the great authors whom I have cited; and I trust they will thence find a great increase in their comforts, and that their happiness will be less exposed to concussion, when sounded on the solid basis of divine favour.

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SECTION LI.

On Indifference and Insensibility to Religion, arising from Hardness of Heart. No Progress can be made in Christian Philosophy in such a State, as it is a State incompatible with the divine Influence.

THE fine feelings with which nature formed the heart of man in his primeval state, and with which perhaps every infant is born, are too often rendered obtuse by indiscriminate commerce with the world; and the heart of flesh, once tremblingly alive to the foftest touch of sympathy, is metamorphosed to a heart of stone. Deplorable change! for what is man when he ceases to feel? a reasoning vegetable, with this painful pre-eminence over the nettles and briars, that he has the power of being actively mischievous in the present flate, and capable, when the fenfibility shall be restored in another, of final and unsufferable woe. To lapse into this condition, to become past feeling, to have a feared conscience, is, without doubt, the heaviest calamity of which human nature is susceptible. Perhaps he who is reduced to it is not conscious of it at the time; a circumstance which, contrary to what might be expected, ultimately aggravates his misfortune. It is characteristic of this state, that while it is alive to the vanities and miseries of the world, it is dead to God and all the delicate fensations of unaffected virtue.

This condition of religious infensibility is not to be accounted for by causes merely physical or philosophical. The middle-aged sall into it as well as the old, the healthy as well as the diseased, men of the brightest talents no less than the dull and the stupid. But Christian Philosophy traces its origin, and pronounces it the consequence of an unregenerated state, or the total defect of divine grace. He who lives in it has forfaken his God, the guide of his youth; and his God has forfaken him, and given him up to a reprobate mind, a heart of STONE, at once cold and impenetrable. Whom HE WILL, HE HARDENETH*.

Happily he, who in his displeasure inflicted the misfortune, can remove it. " A new heart (fays "God) will I give you, a new Spirit will I put " into you; and I will take away the STONY heart " out of your flesh; and I will put my Spirit " within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, " and ye shall keep my judgments and do themt."

From this declaration mankind may conclude, (as many ever have been and still are experimentally convinced,) that God influences the human bosom by his actual interposition, and the supernatural energy of his Holy Spirit. Christ himself says, " Lo! I am with you, even unto the end of the world." But how is he with us but by the Holy Ghost, whose ordinary operations are now as energetic as ever on the bosom of the true believer. Except a man be born again of this Spirit, we read in express language, " he cannot see the kingdom of " God." No words can be more explicit. They mean regeneration by Grace, or what elfe do they mean? They support, as on a rock, the doctrine of divine agency; and without this doctrine, all teaching and preaching is "as falt that has loft " its favour." This doctrine forms the folid basis of CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY. All morality, every precept and principle which leads to happiness

^{*} Romans, ix. 18. † Ezekiel, xxxvi. 26, 27.

present or future, stand upon it immoveably. Other buildings are of hay and stubble; this is-

of gold and marble.

And with respect to the charge of blameable enthusiasm, which is constantly brought, and cannot be too frequently repelled, let us hear Bishop Lavington, so great an enemy to methodism, that he wrote the severest book which ever appeared in opposition to it. But thus he speaks to his clergy, on a solemn occasion, when he was instructing them how to execute their pastoral office:

"My brethren," (fays he,) "I beg you will " rife up with me against MORAL PREACHING. We " have long been attempting the reformation of the " nation by discourses of this kind. With what " fuccess? None at all. On the contrary, we " have dextroully preached the people into down-"right infidelity. We must change our voice. "We must preach Christ, and him crucified. No-" thing but the Gospel is, nothing will be found " to be, the power of God unto falvation, besides. " Let me therefore again and again request, may I " not add, let me CHARGE you, to preach JESUS, " and falvation through his name. Preach the "Lord who bought us; preach redemption "through his blood; preach the faying of the " great High Priest; HE WHO BELIEVETH SHALL " BE SAVED; preach repentance towards God, and " faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

Thus Bishop Lavington; a man who abhorred fanaticism. Who could ever suspect Archbishop Secker*, Bishop Hurd, Bishop Horne, Bishop

L 3. Horstey,

^{* &}quot;The truth, I fear, is," (fays Archbishop Secker,) "that "many, if not most of us, have DWELT TOO LITTLE ON "THESE DOCTRINES" (the doctrine of Grace and other peculiar

Horsley, of irrational enthusiasm? Yet, in their discourses and charges, they all urge their Clergy, not to preach mere moral doctrines, the philosophy of the heathens, but the Gospel; that is, the great doctrines of redemption, atonement, satisfaction by Christ, and the necessity and importance of divine Grace. If, by the coming of Christ, God recommended only a MORAL SYSTEM, merely REPUBLISHED the religion of nature, this would in fact have been no Revelation. Indeed, a merely moral Christianity is Deism.

When Christianity is the national religion, and great revenues are allotted to its professional teachers, many may chuse to join the crowd of Christians for the loaves and fishes; many may call themselves Christians who have nothing of Christianity but the name, and in their hearts despise even the name; but let all serious and sensible men remember, that if the Gospel is hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose eyes the God of this world hath blinded; let them in time beware, lest that come upon them which is spoken by the prophet: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wise understand, though a MAN declare it unto you*."

tuliar doctrines of Christianity) " in our sermons - by no means, in general, from difbelieving or slighting them."

Again, fays the fame differning Primate, "We have, in fact, lost many of our people to sectaries, by not "PREACHING IN A MANNER SUFFICIENTLY EVANGELICAL."

SECKER'S CHARGE.

There never was a more discreet, rational, or judicious Archbishop than Secker. He could not favour fanaticism.

· Acts, xiii. 40, 41.

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SECTION LII.

A Self-Examination recommended respecting religious Insensibility.

I fate of his heart. Let us all look inwardly, and consider our real state, without self-statery and deceit, uninterrupted either by business or

pleafure.

Does my heart require renovation? Is it pionsly inclined to God, and kindly to my fellow-creature? Am I convinced of my own ignorance, weakness, and unworthiness? Have I enquired into the health of my foul, the state of my temper and disposition, with half the solicitude with which I take care to feed, to cure, to adorn my body? If not, I may call myself a Christian, and join the congregation of Christians, but I am probably still a heathen, still unregenerate. I may be in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity. My heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of fin, and as I value my happiness in this short flate of existence, or my immortal foul, I must feek the divine Grace, to give me a feeling sense of my wants and wretchedness, and of God's power to illuminate and comfort me by his Holy Spirit.

But supposing that I am feelingly convinced of sin and misery, and sincerely wish to be delivered from it, do I seek deliverance by the Gospel means, that is, through Jesus Christ; or do I depend upon my own reason, a few moral acts and habits observed for the sake of decency, for my own health,

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wealth, and that reputation in the world which is necessary to the advancement of my interest? If so, my morality is worldly wisdom, and my religion has no claim to Christianity. I am unregenerate, unconverted, unrenewed, notwithstanding my baptism and my professions; and continuing as I do by choice a heathen, in the midst of the light of Christianity, which at the same time I solemnly profess, I must finally perish, after an unsatisfactory life.

Is my Christianity a cold, philosophical assent to a few propositions in the Gospel, evident before the Gospel was divulged, and such as I select from others of the same authority in the same book, which I do not so well approve? Then is my religion nominal only. I profess to believe, as others appear to do, what I never in my life fully confidered. I am content to live without God in the WORLD, fo long as my corn and my wine increase, and I can say to my soul, "Soul, thou " hast much goods laid up for many years, take " thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry *." For the fake of living at peace, and for the fake of credit, which is intimately connected with my interest, I conform to all outward ceremonies and all moral decencies; but my heart has not yet been truly turned to God. I know no other God than my own gain and pleasure; and as to heaven, this earth, fo long as I fecure to myfelf a large share of it and its good things, is my paradise. I fay to myfelf, "It is good for me to be here; " here will I build my tabernacle; for it is a " pleasant place, and I have a delight therein. But what shall I say when this world is receding

^{*} Luke, xii. 20.

" from me, when my fenses decay, and death

" evidently approaches? Then shall I have no

" comfort, unless God should soften my heart by the effusion of his Spirit. But lest my obduracy

" should grow impenetrable by time, I will im-

" mediately implore the divine favour, in co-ope-

" ration with my own endeavours, to restore my

" religious fenfibility. I will henceforth cultivate

" the love of God."

But to love God only, is not enough. Do I love my FELLOW-CREATURE? or, as it is expressed in Scripture, "my neighbour?" The apostle fays, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of " God, and every one that loveth is born of God, " and knoweth God; he that loveth not, know-" eth not God, and therefore cannot be born of " him, for God is love"." How, then, is my heart affected towards my fellow-creatures? Are my friendships merely combinations for the sake of interest and pleasure? Is there any human being in the world whom I wish to be miserable, and would render fo if I had him in my power? Have I no sympathetic feelings for men as men? If I cannot recollect acts of difinterested benevolence. I may rest affured that it is the same hardness of heart which renders me infensible to God, that has also made me a stranger to the social affections. I have need, therefore, to pray that God would thaw my heart by the funshine of his grace. He who can turn a heart of stone into a heart of slesh, will cause me to feel, by his Spirit's influence, for those who share with me the evils incident to humanity.

By fuch questions as the above, and many fuch every man may propose to himself, the state of the heart may be ascertained much better than by figning articles or repeating a symbol.

God certainly made the heart of man tender. Jesus himself wept, and thus for ever hallowed the briny sountain. Tears are appropriated to man, as one of the most honourable distinctions which separate him from the brute creation. When man has dried up the facred source by acquired insensibility, he has degraded his nature, and must have recourse to God to make him a new creature, to regenerate and render him alive to the sentiments of divine love, and the soft touches of human sympathy. God's Spirit can break the rock of slint asunder, and cause the waters to gush from it in abundance.

And can I venture to hope that he will do so, that he will melt my obduracy? Yes, certainly; for Jesus Christ has promised the influence of his Spirit to renew the heart, and accomplish the great work of regeneration. Without this I cannot be happy. I may be rich, great, learned, but I cannot be happy. I am lost and undone without it; in a state more degraded and wretched than that of the lowest and obscurest human being, whose piety and humility may have drawn down upon his heart the holy emanation of divine love.

SECTION LIII.

The Sum and Substance of Christian Philosophy the Renewal of the Heart by Divine Grace; or the Softening it and rendering it susceptible of virtuous and benevolent impressions, by cultivating the two grand Principles—Piety to God, and Charity to Man.

What is Christian wisdom or philosophy? Let the apostle answer; it is to "put off "the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on "the new man, which, after God, is created in "righteousness and true holiness." We must be born again, or it had been better for us that we had not been born at all. The wisdom from above is the true Christian philosophy; that wisdom which, we are told *, " is first pure, then peace-" able, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of "mercy and good fruits without partiality, and "without hypocrify."

Hardness of heart is incompatible with this wisdom which is full of mercy. The bosom must be softened by divine influence. Redeem the time, therefore, that ye have hitherto lost in a cold, lifeless, formal, decorous religion. Love God, love your neighbour, with the ardour of a sincere mind, and the amiable simplicity of infantine innocence. Seek Jesus Christ with the earnestness of one who is a Christian by choice, and not merely because he was born in a Christian country, or of Christian parents; not because the

laws of the land have established that religion, and it is creditable to appear among its professors in places consecrated to public devotion. Be Christians on your pillows, in your daily employments, in the occupation of your merchandize or agriculture, as well as in your church, and on the day set apart for divine service. Let Christ, by the Holy Ghost, be formed in your hearts, restoring the image of God, in which you were created, but which was fadly sullied, or quite defaced, by the fall of the first Adam, and can be restored only by the mercy of the second.

If there were but a probability that these comfortable doctrines are true, a wise man would cherish them; but as they are abundantly confirmed by the written word, by the church, by the learned, by the experience and testimony of millions of pious men; who would not resolve to believe, and if any doubts should at any time arise,

to fay, "Lord, help thou my unbelief!"

Religion has been, and is, the delight of a great part of our fellow-creatures throughout Christendom. It may be ours, if we duly apply our minds to it. Consider with what ardour of attachment many seek pictures, books, the works of art, the objects of taste and fancy. They learn to love them, by applying their minds to them. Half the application bestowed on things, which, at best, are but toys, if bestowed on religion, would make it your chief delight, the guardian of youth, the comfort of the aged and afflicted. You would no longer consider its duties and employments as heavy and dull. You would feel, not only the offices of charity, but devotion, sweet to your soul. The gracious words of gospel truth,

of prayer, and thanksgiving, would, "come o'er "thine ear," as the poet says,

" —— like the fweet fouth,
" That breathes upon a bank of violets."

It is justly said, that in devotional offices, passion becomes reason, and transport, temper. Heaven must disdain the cold prayer, the lukewarm praise of insensibility and indifference. The incense must blaze on the altar, before the sweet odours can ascend to the skies. Cold devotion is indevout. Heartless thanksgiving is an insult. What! shall we be warm, and anxious, and sanguine, in worldly pursuits, in politics and party, and dull and languid as followers of Christ, in shewing our real in the cause of the great Captain of our salvation, which is the cause of all mankind, a cause in which Heaven and earth are interested?

Be it the great endeavour of all who would obtain wisdom from above, to conciliate, by fervent prayer, the grace of God, which will remove all hardness of heart, the cause of that coldness and insensibility, which is too often most unjustly honoured with the name of MODERATION.*

Rev. iii. 16.

^{* &}quot; Because thou art LUKE-WARM, I will vomit thee out of " my mouth"— * \(\omega_1 \omega_2 \omega_2 \omega_1 \omega_2 \omega_2

SECTION LIV.

as the poet lays

On spiritual Slumber, as described in the Scriptures, and the necessity of being awakened.

THE religious world is divided into many fects; L but perhaps the most numerous party confifts of nominal Christians, who appear to adopt no religious opinions at all; who, indeed, neither deny the truth of any religion, nor controvert its doctrines; but who give themselves up to the pleafures and business of the world, or to mere thoughtleffness and inactivity, and leave religion to its professed ministers, to their neighbours, to the weak, the fick, and the superannuated. In the words of Isaiah, "They hear, but understand not; and see, indeed, but perceive not; the " heart of this people is fat, their ears heavy, and " their eyes shut." With respect to their spiritual state, they may be said to have fallen into a deep fleep; and in the midst of their bodily activity, their fouls are funk in flumber. To thefe the animating words of the apostle are addressed; "Awake, thou that fleepest, and arise from the " dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

Is it possible that men can sleep so soundly, in this uncertain state, while the house they inhabit may be said to be in slames, or when they lie on the brink of a steep cliff, from which, if they fall, they fall to rise no more? Alas! it is not only possible, but common; though it is a sleep, in which, whosoever indulges, may possibly sleep on till he wake no more. It may be a fatal sleep;

the sleep of death; the stupor of a lethargy; the numbness of a spiritual palfy; the insensibility of mortification.

They who fall into this deep sleep, like those who indulge the sleep of nature, commonly lie in DARKNESS; the darkness of voluntary ignorance. Indolence smooths their pillow, and silences their pavilion. Their eyes are closed by prejudice, and the curtains drawn around them by pride and presumption. The opiates of vanity, of worldly ease and pleasure, superinduce a kind of trance. Sealed are their eye-lids, but their sleep is not a quiet sleep; it is not sweet and refreshing, like the sleep of virtue, the balmy repose of health, wearied, at the close of day, with the exertions of beneficence.

It is a fleep interrupted by dreams. Shadowy, fantastic forms, of a thousand shapes and hues, flit before the fancy. Ambition has her dreams, Avarice her spectres, and Pleasure her visions of ideal bliss, painted with a glow of colouring, which the pencil cannot emulate.

Crowns and sceptres, purple robes, crimson banners, with titles of honour, and armorial bearings, pass, like a pageant, before the courtier, the statesman, the senator, the lawyer, the warrior. He fixes his eye upon them devoutly. He catches at them eagerly, as the glittering train moves on. They elude his grasp. He catches again. The air-drawn baubles vanish. Again he is disappointed. Still he perseveres; and with aching heart, and trembling knees, and palsied hand, he reaches, at last, with great difficulty, a coronet, a star, a ribband, and places it on his shaking head, or his throbbing bosom;—then, stumbling on the dark mountains, down he falls, stripped

ftripped of all his blushing honours and his gorgeous robes. Clad in a shroud, and with a few vain words engraved on his cossin-plate, he is thrust, lest he should become noisome, into a mouldy vault, to rot and be forgotten HERE, where alone he sought distinction; and to appear all shivering and naked, before Christ, his judge; of whom he never once thought seriously, during the deep sleep and the long day-dreams of a vain, worldly, irreligious life.

Behold another dreamer, with a hoary head, lying down to rest, not on fost pillows; but on bags of gold. It is the mifer; he dreams that the pale spectre of haggard poverty is pursuing hard after him; a cold fweat bedews his emaciated cheeks. and his teeth shake; but he is cheered again by dreaming of bargains, usurious contracts, of joining house to house; and laying field to field; of faving all he gains, of taking advantage of the wants of one, and the ignorance of another, to fill his enor mous cheft. And lo! it is now full. Is he happy? and does he use it? Does he enjoy it, for the purpose it was designed? Does he think of God, the giver of all good things? Does he diftribute it to the poor? No; his joy confifts in telling it o'er and o'er, weighing it with shaking hands, and viewing it with a dim spectacled eye, which can scarcely diffinguish a counterfeit from a true coin. At fome future period, when he shall have completed a certain fum, he dreams that he shall build, plant, do good, and be whatever a man ought to be. But the fleep of death comes on before the dream of life is over, and he is gone. And lo! his heir thrusts him into the ground, with a face of affected grief, that can hardly bide

his real joy. Down finks the dreaming dotard, into the bosom of that earth to which his mind was prone; his very name rots with his emaciated body; and his spirit, all poor, naked, and beggarly, moans and bewails that he laid up no treasure in heaven; that, in his earthly visions, he never thought of his soul; never felt a desire for the riches of grace.

And now behold his heir. Possessed of wealth which he never knew the toil of earning, he becomes a man of pleasure; and he also dreameth a dream. The banquet is prepared. The wine giveth its colour in the cup. The gaming-table is before him. Noise and riot drive away thought and care. The finging men and the finging women enter. Money is lavished on horses, dogs, sharpers, buffoons; and no debts regarded but those of false honour. His heart dances to the melody of the harp and the viol; he pampers every-bodily fense, till pleasure itself is converted into pain or insensibility. He dreams on, and soon sees phantoms of pleasure, the ghosts of departed joys, dancing, in mockery, before his eyes. His powers of perception decay, his youth and health are departed, and he droops like a hyacinth, broken down by a hasty shower, before it has expanded its beauty. Down he finks to the earth, into an untimely grave, and mourns, as he retires from the shadowy scene, that a greediness of pleasure furfeited his senses, and robbed him, not only of longer life, but of real enjoyment during its continuance. What preparation did he make to relish the pleasures which flow at God's right hand; the pleasures of reason, the sweets of benevolence, all-pure, all-spiritual, as exquisite in the enjoyment,

ment, as exalted and durable in their nature? Alas! none. He had neither time nor inclination. His foul slept, while his body waked with a fever; the fine sensibilities of the spiritual nature were enveloped in slumber, while his bodily senses were unnaturally jaded, and prematurely worn out by constant vigilance and activity. He drank the cup of pleasure to the dregs, and the dregs were to his palate wormwood, and to his vitals poison.

Similar to fuch flumbers and fuch dreams are the flumbers and dreams of many whom we meet walking in their fleep, in the streets of the city; whom we behold all lively and active in the gailyilluminated theatres of pleafure, in the crowded emporium of commerce, in the courts of princes, in the senate-house, in the forum, and at the tribunal. Deeply do they drink the draughts of worldly vanity, which, like doses of opium, lay them indeed asleep; but at the same time fill them with felf-conceit and pride, and disturb them with dreams, wild as the scenes of fairy land. It is not a sweet sleep; it is the sleep of disease, and refembles what the physicians call the COMA VIGIL, a waking flumber, a dangerous fymptom. Then, let no man indulge the first tendencies to the sleep of the foul; but rather shake off dull sloth, and hear the voice which calls him like the cheerful herald of the morning: "Awake, thou that fleep-"est, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall " give thee light." Cheerful, pleafant, merciful warning! But many, it is feared, are too fast asleep to hear it. They are, in their torpid state, like the fwallows, in the winter; but even the fwallows when the fpring calls them forth, rife from their temporary death in unknown regions, to foar with

joy and triumph in the fields of ather. The primrofes and violets steep on their banks for many months; but when the bland voice of the zephirs whispers "arife," you fee them spring forth, lift up their heads, and drink the fun-beams, and the dew of heaven. And shall the cold ear of man be deaf to the still fmall voice of conscience: and shall his eyes be impenetrable to the beams of grace? Many feem to have little in their nature of a religious disposition; yet let us not conclude that any of the fons of Adam, any of the redeemed of Christ, are destitute of that LIVING PRINCIPLE. which is to be fostered and cherished even to immortal life. There is in every man a fpark, perhaps a latent spark, which only requires to be gently blown by the aspiration of the Holy Ghost, to become a clear light, and afford a vital warmth. to guide to all evangelical truth, and to invigorate the mind with faith and hope. There is in every man a feed of virtue, goodness, and piety, which only requires the divine grace to fhine upon it, in order to become a flourishing plant, exuberant in its fine foliage, beautiful in its bloffom, abundant in its delicious fruit, firiking root deeply in the heart, reaching the heavens with its branches, and vegetating in beautiful verdure to all eternity.

To excite this spark, to cherish this little tender sced of grace, this, O sons of men, is the work, this the labour. Arise, therefore, and be doing, and the Lord be with you.

Let us, then, take an impartial view of our own state, and examine whether many of us are not in the state of spiritual sleeping and dreaming already described. How passes our life? We eat, we drink, we sleep. To-morrow and to-morrow the fame dull repetition: we eat, we drink, we fleep. So also do the poor animals around us, whom we look down upon as our inferiors. How are we employed in the intervals of this vegetative life? We buy, we fell, we dress, we trifle, we visit, we tell or hear the tale of the day, often a trifling, often a false, sometimes a malevolent one; but in all this, have little other design than to pass away the time without resection; to forget ourfelves; to hide the prospect before us—death, judgment, heaven, and hell!

How stands the real state of that religion which we profess? We learned our catechism in our infancy; we read the bible at school; we go to church like others; we hear and repeat our prayers; but have we, indeed, confidered our religion as our principal concern? Christianity is either true or not true. If we believe it true, it must be our chief concern; if not true, then why mock we both God and man by our hypocrify? But we profess to believe it. Have we any secret exercises of the foul in converse and communion with God? Do we fpend any time with our own hearts? Have we no fweet intercourse with heaven in folitude? no fervour of piety, no inward religion, no spiritual sensibility, no pious ardour, no secret ftore of comfort unknown to the world, and which the world cannot reach, locked up as a precious jewel, in the casket of the heart? If we have not, we are affuredly in that state which requires us to liften to that animating call, "Awake, "thou that fleepest, and arise from the dead;" for dead we are to God; dead to every thing but that vanity which ever terminates in vexation; dead to all those remains of excellence, which

have preferved, amidst the ruins of human nature, fome faint vestige of its original grandeur and

Take away the spiritual life, and you level man with the brutes. He becomes immediately what the philosophers of old called him, an animal with two legs and without feathers. How are the mighty fallen! The wings of the eagle are clipped. He no longer eves the golden fun, but grovels, like a reptile, on the earth. You not only level him with the brutes, you make him more miferable than they: for he is forely fenfible of his evils, which they are not; he is fenfible of his forlorn condition, fenfible of the shortness and possible evils of life, suffers imaginary as well as real woe, and fees the gloomy profpect before himthe grave opening to swallow him up, and the posfibility of fomething terrible beyond it. If we are but animals, then are we of all animals most miserable!

Since a religious LETHARGY is thus degrading to our nature, thus productive of mifery, let us rescue ourselves from it to day, while it is called to-day; and let no man fay with the fluggard, " a little more fleep, and a little more flumber, a " little more folding of the hands to fleep." Life ebbs apace. The day is far fpent to many of us. The night is at hand, when the fad licence may be allowed to us in that fevere permission, "Sleep on. " now, and take your rest." Your fun is set, to rife no more. Death's fcythed, triumphal car, drives on rapidly, and mows down all that stand in the way. It is computed, by the ingenious in calculation, that, on the furface of the globe. more than fifty thousand mortals, men, women, and children,

children die every night. How foon may any one of us make an unit in the thousands that every hour go down into the pit and are nn more seen!

One of the best means of exciting ourselves, is a due preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Let us never fail to receive it at Christmas, Whitsuntide, and Easter. We shall thus experience a resurrection from the sleep and death of indifference, to life and hope in Christ our Redeemer.

It is, indeed, an alarming fymptom of the spiritual slumber, that many of us go on from month to month, and from year to year, without receiving the sacrament; without seeking that mysterious communion between God and our souls; without feeling any need of it; without desiring it; without any hunger or thirst after it. If we were not wrapt in a deep sleep, or state of stupidity, we should long for it; feel an appetite for the heavenly manna; and come to the Lord's table, as to our daily meals, with eagerness and alacrity.

What shall we think of those numerous persons who, from year to year, hear notice given of the sacrament to be administered, and pay it not the least attention? who think it a matter which may concern any body but themselves? How many among the poorest of the poor never approached the altar; live and die, without having once received the sacrament, or sought any other means of grace? Do they think the rich only are capable of grace; that the rich only have souls to save; that our Lord, like the world, invites the rich only to his table? Think, did I say? Alas! they think little on the subject. They are in a deep sleep; lost in the night of ignorance. And it unfor-

tunately

tunately happens, that if they are awakened at all, it is usually by the call of some enthusiast improperly called a methodifi*, who leads them from the chilness of indifference, to the burning fever of fanatical devotion. Let them rather hear the EVANGELICAL call, and apply it to themselves without delay; "Awake, thou that fleepest:" and let them obey the friendly voice of him who came expressly to preach the gospel to the poor. Let them prepare themselves immediately to use the means of grace afforded them by the facrament of the Lord's supper, and be thankful that at that table there are no invidious distinctions; that the rich and poor meet together, prostrate on their knees, before their Maker, partaking his bounty without partiality, and fupplicating his mercy; all equally poor and helplefs, without his GRACE.

There are, it feems probable, many others among us, who think themselves too young to be at all concerned with things fo ferious as the facrament. They go, indeed, to church, but never think of the holy communion, because they are too young to be ferious. Permit me to ask, what is the precise age at which the care of the foul is to commence? When does the minority of the foul terminate? If all are exempt who are young, and who think themselves young, how great will be the number! Is not going to church, a ferious thing? They do not think themselves too young to go to church. May it not then be suspected, that as they think themselves unconcerned with the prayers and discourses of the church; and so may frequent the church, merely to display their ex-

^{*} Methodism is described as GODLINEESS without ORDER."

ternal garb, to gaze and to be gazed at, to pais away an idle hour, and to comply with an established custom. But if there be truth in Christianity, they are trifling with the most important matters, in a most dangerous manner. They are acquiring a HABIT of confidering the most facred things with INDIFFERENCE. If they are too young to think of ferious things, they certainly are not too young to die. Let them take a walk in the church-yard, and read the infcriptions on the tomb-stones. They will find perhaps, as many young as old, among the victims of death; and they must allow that youth is a more dangerous feafon, with respect to temptations, than any other; and consequently, that it more particularly requires the fuccours of divine grace, to keep it from falling into fin and mifery. And what so powerful a means of grace as the facrament, after a due preparation?

No; you are not too young to receive the divine bleffing of grace. Only be fenfible how wretched and how profligate you may become; into what shameful and dreadful conduct you may fall, without it. Awake, therefore, from a fleep, which you cannot indulge without lofing the morning of life; the best season for every kind of work, spiritual as well as worldly. Begin well, in order to end weld. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, and he will not forget you in the days of your old age. Trust not in beauty. Trust not in strength. Beauty alone has no charms in the eye of Heaven. Strength of body cannot avail against the arm of offended Omnipotence. But beauty and strength, combined with virtue and piety-how lovely in the fight of men! how pleasing to Heaven-peculiarly pleasing, because

canfe, with every temptation to deviate, they voluntarily walk in the path of duty.

There is another class yet, with whom I shall expostulate on the propriety of receiving the facrament, which they are but too apt to neglect, apparently from an idea that they have no concern in it. They claim to be lookers-on, like spectators at a contest for life and death, without any interest in the event. I mean the numerous persons who fill the very useful and creditable station of fervants and dependants, apprentices, and labourers for hire. These are apt to consider Sunday merely as a holiday, or rather vacation from labour; a day in which they are to adorn themselves above their rank and flation, and to facrifice to the idols of false pleasure and expensive vanity. To think of the facrament or any other ferious, affecting duty, on a day devoted to feafting, to jollity, and to wander from house to house, would throw a gloom upon it, inconfistent with their schemes of enjoyment. Thoughtleffness and folly mark their conduct on that day, more than on any day in the week; a day intended for their improvement in all virtue, honesty, and true wisdom. What! have they not fouls, as well as their fuperiors in rank? Is not our God their God? Did not Christ die for them, as well as for their masters or employers? Think of these things, and let not the fabbath-day, intended to promote your falvation, contribute, more than any other day, to your destruction. Would you have it a day of pleasure? In order to be such, let it be a day of innocence, a day of devotion, a day of rational, Sober, discreet recreation.

Think.

Think not that religion will destroy your cheerfulness. No; it will promote it. Nothing gives fo fine spirits as a clear conscience; a bosom that feels the fatisfaction of having discharged its duties to God and man. Then recreation and harmless pleasure are truly delightful. The sweet, in such circumstances, is without bitter; the rose without a thorn; the honey without a sting. I have ever recommended a cheerful religion; because all religion was certainly intended to make men happy; and because gloominess, moroseness, and severity. which some persons require in religious duties. originate in weakness and error, and lead to folly, misery and madness; to all that is despicable or deplorable. As religion is the comfort, superstition and fanaticism are the bane and curse of human nature. Let us ever beware of excess, even in good and laudable pursuits; for wisdom, and virtue, and happiness, all dwell with the golden mediocrity. Our exhortations to religion must indeed be warm and animated; because the greater part of men err, rather in not reaching the defirable point, than by going beyond it. Yet cautions are also necessary, left the willing, the zealous, the tender-hearted, should be urged, by their own ardour and by perfuafion, to dangerous and unhappy extremes.

We have, I think, feen that the lively, animating fummons contained in the words, "Awake, "thou that fleepest," is necessary to a great part of mankind, whose feelings are become callous; and who (to repeat the emphatic words of scripture) have a heart of stone, instead of a heart of slesh; necessary to many, who are, upon the whole, commendable for the general decency and pro-

priety

priety of their conduct in the world, as the world is now circumstanced. Even good kind of people, as they are called, and appear to men, are not sufficiently awakened to the calls of religious duty. They acquiesce in decencies, decorums, plausibilities, and the cold formal morality which may be practifed on the most felfish motives, for worldly interest, for health and for pleasure. They are not fufficiently fensible of the gospel truths, its great promifes, and its dreadful denunciations of vengeance. They are virtuous heathens; followers of the religion of nature, not that of Christ. The world approves them, and therefore they approve themselves; but can the world save them? Can they fave themselves? No; afforedly, if Christianity be not a fable, they must come to Christ for falvation.

Persons who live in pleasure, that is, who make vain and sensual pleasure the sole business of their lives, are expressly said, in scripture, to be dead while they live. They appear with smiles of perpetual gaiety; are often surnished with riches and honours; but yet, in the scripture sense, they are dead, if they are not alive to Christ. What avail their worldly ornaments? The soul takes no real delight in them, because it naturally aspires to higher things. So have I seen a nosegay of tulips, and pinks, and roses, put into the cold hand of a dead corpse, in a cossin, while the poor image of what once was man, could neither see the gaudy tints, nor smell the fragrance.

Shall we then not cry aloud, as we are commanded, in the hope of awakening such unthinking persons to a sense of their own miserable condition, and the hopes afforded by the gospel? Happy for ourselves ourselves and our fellow-creatures, if we could address a slumbering world with the trump of an archangel, uttering these enlivening words, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the "dead; and Christ shall give thee light."

All persons whatever, however decent and moral, that are in an unregenerated state, are represented, in the strong metaphorical language of scripture, as DEAD; but happily it is a death from which we may raise ourselves by PRAYER; and returning life will be cherished by heavenly influence.

For what fays the friendly call? " Christ shall " give thee light." The fun of righteousness shall shine into the dark chambers of thy bosom, dispel the shades of ignorance, and disperse the phantoms of folly and vanity that sported in the funless region. Think, poor darkling mortal, what is promifed thee! "Christ shall give thee "light." As the fun in the morning breaks into thy chamber windows, and thou arifest from thy bed to feel his genial beams, and fee all nature re-affuming her beautiful colours; fo the light of Christ, the light of grace, shall beam upon the foul, by the operation of the Holy Ghoft, and thou shalt arise, and see the truth as it is in Jesus-see the beauty of holinefs-the day-spring from on high-feel new vital warmth glowing in thy bosom; and "though you have lien among the pots"," (in the mire and rubbish of worldly vanity,) " yet shall " you be as a dove, which hath filver wings, and " her feathers like gold.

After living the few days of our pilgrimage thus awake to God, awake to Christ, awake to the

bleffed influences of the Holy Ghoft, your body, indeed, shall lie down, and pay that debt to nature which we must all pay: yet your foul shall separate from it, (though not without a pang, yet) FULL OF HOPE. Old age, or disease, or accidents, will indeed bring your poor, frail, perishing fiesh (for fuch is that of the strongest, the youngest, the most beautiful of us all) to the grave; your bones must lie down in the dust, from which they were taken, and the mourners shall go about the streets; but let them not mourn without hope. Thy fleshshall rest in hope; peaceful shalt thou sleep till the morning of the refurrection; when the trumpet shall found, and a voice shall be heard, fweeter than the sweetest music to the reviving ear "Awake! awake! thou that sleepest, and arise " from the dead, and I will give thee light, life, 4 glory, and immortality. Sleep no more !- Arife, " put on thy beautiful garments !- My glory is "rifing upon thee. Go-bleffed Spirit, and, in "the vefture of a new and glorified body, fhine " among the spirits of just men made perfect-44 thyself a Spirit, an immortal Spirit. Sleep no "more in the arms of death; for death is subdued; " and, as, like a faithful foldier, you watched "with me in the militant state, you shall now "join me in the triumphal. Sleep no more the " fleep of death; but rife, and exult in light " ineffable !"

the set the Rety Coult and bush

SECTION LV.

On the Peace of God, that calm and composed State, which is produced by the Christian Philosophy, and is unknown to the Epicurean, Stoic, and all other Philosophy, antient and modern.

GENERAL prospect of life presents a scene of turbulence, of which the troubled ocean is an emblem. But there is a fweet, a peaceable, a tranquil state of self-possession, whether external circumstances are prosperous or adverse, which constitutes the most solid happiness of which human nature is capable. This enjoyment, arifing from moderate defires, a regulated imagination, lively hopes, and full confidence in the Deity, is that chief good, which philosophers have vainly fought in the schools, by the strongest efforts of unaffisted reason. What then can point it out, if reason, improved by science to the highest degree, has not been able to find it? The answer is obvious. The religion of Jesus Christ offers to its fincere votaries the PEACE OF GOD which paffeth all understanding; a kind and degree of happiness, which no language can clearly express; which the understanding cannot adequately conceive, though the heart can feel it, with the most delightful experience.

"The peace of God," (fays the world,) "what is it?" They know it not. Many have no conception of happiness, independent of external curcumstances; the toys of childhood, protracted to age. They do not fearch for it in themselves,

but in the eyes of the world. All their enjoyments must be violent, sensual, or, at least, OSTEN-TATIOUS. Admire them, talk of them, flatter them; let the diurnal papers exhibit their names in capitals, and fashion crowd to their door; let their equipages be splendid, and their mansions magnificent, their egress and regress recorded in the daily histories, or they ficken in the midst of health; they pine in the midft of abundance; the rose on their bosom, loses its fragrance; the honey on their palates, its flavour. To be celebrated, even for folly, even for vice, is to them an enviable NOTORIETY; to be unnoticed in public circles, in the midft of every real bleffing and folid comfort at home, infufes a bitter into all those fweets, which God in his bounty has lavished.

But the felicity arising from the PEACE OF God is neither the tumultuous extaly of the fanatic, nor the noisy merriment of the prodigal. It seeks no plaudits; it makes no parade. It blazes not out like the sudden eruptions of a volcano; but burns like the vestal fire, clear and constant, with a warmth that invigorates, without feorching; with a light that illuminates, without dazzling the visual faculty.

Thus defirable, how is the PEACE OF GOD to be obtained? it is an important question. Let us enter on the research. If we enter on it with dispositions truly humble and sincere, there is little doubt but we shall experience the truth of that comfortable declaration: "Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find."

What said the wisdom of pagan antiquity, on the means of securing PEACE or tranquility? Much that was plausible; little to the purpose.

It was the advice of an ancient philosopher: " Subject yourfelf to reason, and you shall be reduced to no other subjection." Experience. however, has evinced, that human reason, under a variety of circumstances, is too weak and fallible to be depended upon, for the full fecurity of human happiness. What he vainly attributed to reason, may with justice be ascribed to religion. Religion, duly understood, and duly attended to, is capable of giving much of that freedom from passion and perturbation, to which philosophy in vain pretended. Not that I mean to arregate too much, or claim more than truth and experience will allow, even in favour of religion. While man preferves the nature which God gave him, he must continue subject to the transient impulse of those sensations from external objects which excite passion, and disturb repose.

All I contend for is, that religion, VITAL RELIcion, the religion of the HEART, is the most powerful auxiliary of reason, in waging war with the passions, and promoting that sweet composure which constitutes the peace of God. Reason may point out what is right, but she wants authority in the minds of most men, to enforce obedience to her commands. Here religion steps in with majestic mien, and gives the sanction of a law to the dictates of discretion.

I recommend, therefore, to him who wishes to obtain the peace of God, a diffidence in human reason, however strong by nature, and however improved by study. A considence in it leads to that pride which God resisteth. But I mean this distidence to be chiefly confined to the operations of reason in religious disquisitions. Things above

reason

reason are not to be rejected as contrary to reason, but to be received with a reverential awe, and a devout submission of the understanding to the God who gave it.

He, then, who wishes to tranquillize his bosom, must have recourse to more powerful medicines than those of an empirical philosophy. Philosophy has been tried, from the earliest ages to the present hour, with little success. Philosophy is cold and inactive. She may influence and direct the understanding; but she cannot warm the affections with the love of God and virtue. SENTI-MENT is necessary to impel the heart, to guide or regulate even the virtuous passions; and no sentiment is so efficacious for this purpose as the devotional. The word of God, as the strong language of scripture expresses it, is quick and powerful, and Sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing afunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

From the shallow streams of philosophy, we must hasten to the living fountain of the Christian religion. It is the influence of God on the heart of man, the divine operation of the Holy Spirit on the spirit of human creatures, which alone can bestow a permanent tranquility; that peace of God, which passeth all understanding; that peace, which no human eloquence can clearly explain; which no human sagacity can, by its own unaffissed efforts, procure; but which the devout heart of the believer feels with joy and gratitude.

This is the polar influence which can alone fix the tremulous needle, and point it directly to

Heaven:

Heaven; streaming into the heart of man an emanation of divinity.

Let us then take a view of the fruits of the Spirit, as they are beautifully described by the Apostle. The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meckness, temperance.—These lovely virtues have a natural tendency to produce equanimity, self-possession, a serene, placid, delightful frame of mind, such as the sages of old conceived, indeed, but could not either procure or communicate. These make an earth a Heaven, and render it evident, beyond a doubt, that the true Christian, after all the boasts of the gay voluptuary, is the real MAN OF PLEASURE.

The worldly man of pleasure is indeed, for the most part, a man of pleasure only in name. His pains, upon the whole, greatly outweigh his pleasures; or his insensibility, contracted by excess, leaves him in the midst of all that luxury can spread before him, in a state very remote from the enjoyments of the temperate, humble, and fincere believer.

It would not be right to describe things in a declamatory and rhetorical manner, so as to violate the truth of representation, for the sake of maintaining even the cause of religion. But experience will justify me in afferting, that the numerous tribes in the gay and elevated circles, who pursue happiness in dissipation only, and never think of God, but to swear with levity by his name, exhibit many external signs of singular irritation, and peculiar misery. They appear to have no resources in their own bosom. They depend on precarious externals, on the will and co-operation

co-operation of others, for all their pleasures. CHANGE OF PLACE is their grand remedy for their uneafy fenfations*. Like a fick man, who turns from fide to fide on his bed, in hope of that fleep which his fever denies, they fly to various fcenes of public refort, in the midst of amusements, unamused; in the midst of pleasure, unpleased; and reluctantly return to their home, where God has given them a good inheritance. They have used, or rather abused, all their comforts. They are glutted with pleasure. Nothing has the grace of novelty to recommend it. Behold their diffatisfied countenances, and their artificial smiles, to hide them at the gay places of public amusement. Their appetite grown dull, this world affording no new joy, and the next never in their thoughts, they are, at first, the slaves of folly, and, at last, the victims of defpair.

How different is it with him who has happily been tinctured with religion in his early age, and learned to feek, as his chief good, "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding?" Great peace have they that love thy law*. I do not

* Lucretius well describes this restlessness :

Commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possi.

Exit sape foras magnis ex ædibus ille.

Esse domi quem pertæsum est, subitoque revertit;

Quippe foris nibilo melius qui sentiat esse.

Currit agens mannos ad villam; bic præcipitentur

Auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans:

Oscitat extemplo, tetigit cum limina villæ.

Aut abit in somnum gravis; atque oblivia quærit;

Aut etiam properans urbem petit, atque revisit.

Hoc se quisque modo sugit: at, quod scilicet, ut sit,

Essugere baud potis ess, ingretis bæret, et angit.

Lucretius.

affirm

affirm that the Christian religion pretends, like the arrogant philosophy of the stoics, to place man out of the reach of evil, or to render him infensible of misery. A certain portion of evil and mifery is to be the lot of every mortal; and wife purposes are effected by chastisement, when fuffered to operate in its regular manner in the production of humility, godly forrow, repentance, and amendment. But this I fay, and am justified in the affertion by the scriptures of God, and by the experience of many pious believers, there is nothing which can lesen the evils of life so much, or teach a man to bear them with fuch fortitude, as a full dependence on God, and a habit of feeking pleasure in warm yet rational devotion. It will ever be found by those who thus seek it faithfully

It is not, indeed, to be believed, but that God; whose Providence superintends the animal and vegetable world, and the inanimate creation, should watch over the spiritual with peculiar care, and conduct it by his immediate influence. A foul, therefore, which, by piety and charity, humbly endeavours to obey the revealed will of God, and to render itself acceptable to the eye which is too pure to behold iniquity without offence, will probably be fure of peculiar regard. No evil fo great shall happen to it; no misfortune so heavy shall befall it, but that a way to escape shall be opened, or a supernatural power of bearing it afforded. A ray of funshine will beam upon it from the fountain of spiritual light, when the world prefents nothing but dark clouds. Like the Alpine mountain, the good and devout Christian rifes above the clouds, and enjoys a glorious funshine, which erring mortals below him cannot partake. He who enjoys the peace of God, may

^{*} Pfalm cxix. 165.

be faid to refemble the halcyon, whose nest floats on the glassy sea, undisturbed by the agitation of the waves.

Men deem themselves fortunate in obtaining the patronage of a sellow-creature like themselves, elevated by the savour of a prince or by his own industry, above the common level. They seel themselves safe under his protection, from the evils of poverty. Yet what is the protection of man, of princes and nobles, to the protection of the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, the Ruler of Princes? But the pious Christian believes sirmly that he enjoys the unspeakable advantage. It is a continual feast to him. It is a perennial spring of living water. In adversity or prosperity, his CHIEF GOOD remains like the mountain, which cannot be moved. It is the rock of ages, on which he builds the fair fabric of his selicity.

What is there, in all the pomp of the world, and the enjoyments of luxury, the gratification of passion, comparable to the tranquil delight of a good conscience? It is the health of the mind. It is a fweet perfume, that diffuses its fragrance over every thing near it, without exhausting its store. Unaccompanied with this, the gay pleasures of the world are like brilliants to a diseased eye, music to a deaf ear, wine in an ardent fever, or dainties in the languor of an ague. To lie down on the pillow, after a day spent in temperance, in beneficence, and piety, how fweet is it! How different from the state of him, who reclines, at an unnatural hour, with his blood inflamed, his head throbbing with wine and gluttony, his heart aching with rancorous malice, his thoughts totally estranged from him who has protected him in the

day, and will watch over him, ungrateful as he is, in the night feafon! A good conscience is, indeed, the peace of God. Passions lulled to sleep, clear thoughts, cheerful temper, a disposition to be pleased with every obvious and innocent object around; these are the effects of a good conscience; these are the things which constitute happiness; and these condescend to dwell with the poor man, in his humble cottage in the vale of obscurity. In the magnificent manfion of the proud and vain, glitter the exteriors of happiness, the gilding, the trapping, the pride, and the pomp; but in the decent habitation of piety is oftener found the downy nest of heavenly peace; that folid coop, of which the parade of the vain, the frivolous, and voluptuous, is but a shadowy semblance.

I fee a crowd, travelling, by choice, on the Sunday, (the day of rest appointed for man and beast, by the benevolent being who made them,) with a speed that almost outstrips the wind. Whither are they hastening? To the regions of delight; fome place of modifi refort; where the found of the viol invites; where the fong, and the dance, and the festive board, promise pleasure withoutfalloy. Join the train awhile, and mark the event. The variety of objects diffipates care for a short time; but weariness soon ensues, and satiety converts the promifed pleasure to indifference, at leaft, if not to pain. And now they return to their home, the feat of plenty, with countenances that by no means express satisfaction at what is just past; that satisfaction which might have been expected, confidering the preparation, the expence, the haste, and the eagerness, which appeared in the commencement and progress of

the fashionable excursion. Piety, charity, domestic comfort, have all been sacrificed at the shrine of Fashion; and the fickle, unfeeling deity has bestowed nothing in return, but weariness, languer, and a total disrelish of the pleasures of simplicity, the sweets of innocence, the feast of benevolence, and the enlivening ardour of devotion.

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To contrast the scene, I picture a regular, respectable, religious family, spending their time, after the performance of their focial, public, or professional duties, around the domestic fire-side, in peace and love. Every countenance is illumined with cheerfulness. No tedium, no exhausted fpirits, no pale, ghaftly vifages, from the vigils of the card-table; no envious feelings, no jealoufy nor rage at the fight of superior splendor. Pleased with a well-spent day, they fall on their knees before they retire to repose, and thank the Giver of all comfort for the mercies already received; and pray, with humble confidence, for protection in the night, and continuance of mercy during the remainder of life. Cheerful and refreshed, they rife in the morning, and go forth to the labours of life, chaunting the carols of pious gratitude. Here is enjoyment of existence; this is life indeed*, with a perpetual relish; not attended with the tumultuary ardours of a fever, but the gentle, pleafant warmth of found health.

You, therefore, who, blessed by Providence with profusion of wealth, are enabled to make pleasure your constant pursuit, try the experiment, whether pleasure of the purest kind is not to be drawn from the fountains of piety and divine love,

* Hoc est vivere.

346.7

Amusements and pleasures, commonly so called, are not to be rigidly renounced. They are not only allowable, but defirable and ufeful; folacing poor human nature in its forrows, and promoting, by temporary relaxation, the energies of virtue. But furely it is possible to retain religious principles inviolate, and to be uniformly actuated by religious fentiments, in a life occasionally diverfified by cheerful, and moderate, and innocent amusements. Only keep your heart with all diligence. Let your imagination be pleased; your thoughts occasionally diverted; but let your heart be unseduced from the love of him who first loved you. Let your affections still point, like the needle to the north, wherever the vessel is blown by the winds, towards God. Your hands may be employed, in the avocations of focial life and civil fociety: but let your heart be at leisure for the things which belong unto your peace; which will render your life constantly cheerful, and your death as little painful as the struggles of nature will admit:

It is never improper to caution the Christian, who seeks the peace of God, against such a degree of impassioned religion as tends by its violence, to destroy all true devotion, or to abbreviate its continuance. There certainly are religious persons, who, through the disorder of their imaginations, and weakness of judgment, seem not to enjoy that tranquility, or peace of God, which religion is calculated to produce.

Gentleness and moderation contribute to the increase as well as duration of our most refined enjoyments. We see nothing of extreme rigour, nothing of unnatural austerity, nothing of intem-

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perate ardour, in the devotion of our Saviour or his disciples; so that they seem to be no less repugnant to the gospel, than to reason and philosophy. Nothing violently passionate is durable; no, not even the ecstacies of religion. Violent passion is like a flood after great rains. However it may rush in torrents for a day, it will exhaust itself, and dwindle to the shallow stream, scarcely creeping within the banks of its natural channel.

The passions are the chief destroyers of our peace; the storms and tempests of the moral world. To extirpate them is impossible, if it were desirable. But to regulate them by habitual care, is not so dissicult, and is certainly worth all our attention. Many men do evidently acquire a wonderful command of their passions, in the presence of their superiors, or when their temporal interest is concerned. And shall we not attempt it in presence of God dwelling in us, and for an everlasting interest?

The task is facilitated by the grace of God, which certainly co-operates with man in every virtuous endeavour. To Jesus Christ, then, let us have recourse, as to the best philosopher. He who said to the sea, "Be still," will calm our passions, as he smoothed the waves. Peace was the legacy which he lest to his followers. Hear his bland and soothing words: "Peace I leave with "you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." "The work of righteousness," says Isaiah, "is peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and as unance for ever." "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you," says St. Peter, "through "the

" the knowledge of God, and of our Lord Jefus " Christ."

"Not as the world giveth," fays our Saviour,
give I peace." The world fpeaks peace, when there is no peace. Dissipation, variety of worldly business, worldly cares, worldly company, riot, noise, intemperance, produce a rumult, which banishes reslection, but cannot cause ferenity, felf-possession, and composure. The sick man, who has recourse to opium and strong drink to lull his malady in a deceitful oblivion, increases his pain and his danger.

The Christian seeks peace, by seeking pardon of God by repentance. "Acquaint thyself with "God, and be at peace." He seeks peace, by keeping a watch on those great destroyers of it, his passions. On these tumultuous waves he pours the oil of Christian love, and they are calm. Thus he lives;—at peace with himself, at peace with his neighbour, and at peace with his God.

Thus he lives; and when he quits this earthly frene,—(like a river, whose banks are flowery, and whose waters limpid and smooth,)—he glides, unruffled, into the ocean of eternity. Go, then, gentle Spirit, to the realms of peace, and enjoy the peace of God!—in the bosom of thy father, and our father*. Very pleasant hast thou been unto ust, during the time of thy sojourning here. Dove-like were thy manners; for the Spirit, which descended like a dove, inspired thee with every amiable disposition, and above all, with the LOYE OF PEACE, national and public, as well as

^{*} John, xx. 17. † 2 Sam. i. 26.

internal: and BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS; theirs shall be the peace of God which passeth all understanding, in the KINGDOM of HEAVEN.

In the kingdoms of the earth, indeed, there is feldom any lasting peace. What Christian but must drop a tear over the fertile realms of Christendom crimsoned with human blood; shed at the instigation of the spirit of Apollyon, or the Destroyer, taking his abode in hearts which have rejected the Holy Ghost, the spirit of love, the God of peace! May the rulers of the world receive the Spirit of Christ, and heal the wounds of the people; so shall they experience, in the hour of their own distress, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and their crowns shall be immortal.

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General Reflections on HAPPINESS-ERROR in the Pursuit of it-No sublunary Happiness perfect .-Christ's invitation to the wretched .- CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY affords the highest earthly Satisfaction. -Its SUMMUM BONUM is a State of GRACE, or the Enjoyment of divine Favour.

To what purpole are laboured declamations on I the mifery of man? He can want no studied proofs of a wretchedness which he sees in others. and feels in his own bofom. To expatiate on the fymptoms of a difeafe, without pointing out a cure or an alleviation, is only to add to the pain, by increasing the impatience of the sufferer.

After all the melancholy pictures of human life, it must be allowed, that there is much comfort in the world, blended with its mifery. Look abroad, from the library into real life, and you will fee a general appearance of cheerfulness. clouds intervene, funshine predominates. The labourer and mechanic chant over their daily toil; and though they paufe to wipe the fweat off their brow, return to their work, after a short but hearty meal, and the fweetest slumbers, not only without a murmur, but with alacrity.

The prospect of reward at the close of a laborious day, the viciflitudes of rest and labour, the fuccession of ideas in active employment, the warmth and agitation of the animal spirits consequent on exertion, superinduce a delightful oblivion of care, and render the state of those who

are supposed to be the least happy, the poor and laborious, frequently most pleasurable.

Nor let the higher ranks among us be enviously and malignantly misrepresented. Many in the higher ranks devote their time to business and pleafure alternately, and though the harp and the viol, the tabret, and pipe, and wine, are in their feasts*; yet fome of them, guided by prudence, moderation, and piety, take a delight, at the same time, in regarding the work of the Lord, and considering the operation of his handst; fuffering neither pleasure nor business to interrupt their endeavour to improve in grace, and to exercise themselves in works of devotion and charity. With respect to CHARITY, which distinguishes this age and nation above all the nations on the face of the earth, by whom are the great establishments for all infirmities and cafualties raifed and supported, but by the rich and noble, by successful men in business, who most benevolently endeavour to communicate the happiness to which they were born, or with which Providence has bleffed their exertions? Happy in themselves, they endeavour to deserve or fanctify their prosperity, by imitating him who gave it, in acts of most disinterested beneficence. For a proof of this, look into our public diaries, and the registers of great charities; and see how eagerly the rich and great contribute to their fupport.

So that, upon the whole, there is certainly an appearance of goodness and of joy on the face of human affairs; and this appearance, in many cases, is, most certainly, supported by reality. The world abounds with good as well as evil. Our

own disposition and discontent too often poison and embitter the rich repast.

It is indeed evident that there is more good than evil in the world. Plenty is certainly more common than fcarcity; health than fickness; ease than pain. And this is so far confirmed by experience, as to render the descriptions of human misery, which we read in declamatory harangues, worthy of little credit and attention. Few, comparatively, know what it is to be completely miserable. Who of us, in this country, does not every day enjoy some solid comfort? A vast majority is warmly clothed, plentifully sed, and accommodated with a house for shelter, and a bed for repose.

Yet let the balance be held evenly. There is, we all experience, an abundance of evil in the world; and it is aggravated and actually increased by fear, and the activity of a lively imagination.

It is true also, that the best of our pleasures and enjoyments are rather amusive, than perfectly and durably satisfactory. For who ever declared himself, in the midst of grandeur, pleasure, opulence, happy to the utmost extent of his wishes? Who but, in some moments, has selt a sentiment of discontent? Who ever said, "I am now in "that settled state of enjoyment and perfect "contentment, that I conceive not a wish of addition to it; I look not to a suture day for an "increase; I acquiesce; free at once from hope "and from fear?" An involuntary sigh rises in the height of our prosperity.

I shall think myself not uselessly employed in the endeavour to discover the causes of man's failure in search of satisfaction. What is it that dashes dashes his sweetest and most plentiful cup with a

In the first place, man raises his expectations too high; beyond what nature and experience justify; when he ventures to promife himself any happiness without defect, and without abatement; a fun without fpot; a sky without a cloud. The world is not our home. The world is now old; and the experiment of attaining to perfection of happiness has been tried by every individual that ever existed in it. Many have left on record an account of their experiments, and an uniform avowal of disappointment. He, therefore, that would taste the happiness allowed to human nature, must learn to take aim at marks within his reach, to be duly fensible of little advantages and common bleffings daily, exemption from evil, from pain, from debt, from extreme want, from infamy, from exile, from imprisonment. How much happier is he who has a fufficiency of food, of raiment, a comfortable house, and a warm bed, than millions of the human race, in favage climes! Yet these things are little thought of by those who murmur at the evils of life, and pine with the mifery of their own fituation. Something unpoffessed still torments; yet all wish to APPEAR happy.

Many things which, in the midst of our complaints, we possess and enjoy in security, would perhaps render half of our fellow-creatures rapturously delighted, though they, who were born to them, pay them not the least attention, in the eagerness of reaching after something more, something higher, something better, to be enjoyed at a future day; that day, which never comes, to mortal man. The possession of our senses entire, of our limbs uninjured; of knowledge and skill, of friends and companions, is often overlooked, though it would be the ultimate wish of many, who, as far as we can judge, deserve it as much as ourselves.

Men always compare themselves with those who are above them, without once looking into the vale below, where thousands stand gazing at them with envy and admiration. By this unfortunate comparison, their own good things lose much of their value in their own esteem, and sometimes become totally insipid.

When we consider the number and variety of evils, almost intolerable, in the life of man, we should learn to esteem every disaster incident to human nature, which has not yet fallen to our lot, as a just cause of self-congratulation, complacency, and gratitude. But through ENVY, we turn from the misfortunes of others; and think only of those advantages which give them a superiority over our own condition. If we fee a man deaf. or dumb, or blind, or lame, or poor, or in difgrace, we do not derive comfort from the confideration of our own exemption from his defects and calamities; but if we observe another adorned with beauty, endued with strength, elevated to a high rank, or loaded with riches, we fecretly repine that we have not been equally bleffed with worldly prosperity.

But let us consider how many there are, who would envy every one who has but health and liberty. Go into an hospital. Visit a poor-house. Inspect a prison. Compare your own health, your own competency, your own liberty, hard

who lies in the agony of pain, or languor of difease, with no help but the cold hand of OFFICIAL charity. No kind relative to sooth with his bland voice, to close his eyes, and shed a tear on his departure. Compare your lot with his who is loaded with chains, where the iron enters his soul, in a cold damp dungeon. Compare it with that of your poorer neighbours, at the next door. Compare it with that of all the sons and daughters of affliction, a large family—every where to be found.

Men are, indeed, too apt to despise what are called little advantages, common comforts, daily pleasures, hourly conveniencies; whereas they are often of the highest importance; as the general happiness of life is usually made up of particulars, which appear minute, but the sum of which makes a great total.—We'wait till to-morrow to be happy; alas! why not to-day? Shall we see better, hear better, taste better? Look at some aged miser, and judge. Then why, in the name of reason, cannot we be happy to-day, with a competency and a clear conscience?

We are unwilling to be satisfied with the pleafures of simplicity, and the delights of nature. The beasts around us are contented. The lark soars, and sings in exultation; but man, forgetful of nature, must have recourse to art, to procure satisfaction; and things seem to have little relish, which are not seasoned by difficulty of attainment. The greater part of worldlings, especially gamesters, esteem mere tranquillity of mind, and ease of body, a state of insipidity.

But, confidering the number of evils in life, man should learn to esteem every one which he has escaped,

escaped, a just cause of self-congratulation and of gratitude. The absence of evil is a real good. Peace, quiet, exemption from pain, should be a continual feast. The aching of a tooth may deprive us of all complacency in the midst of plenty and magnificence. A fit of the gout or stone may make a crown of gold and emeralds, a crown of thorns. Then while we have no pain, no ach, no fickness, why dowe not enjoy our tranquillity with pious exultation?

Here feems to be the grand error. There is a more general defire to appear happy, than to be fo. Men live in the eyes of their neighbours. They wish to possess a glittering happiness, careless of its folidity. They are desirous of being envied, talked of; and, in reaching after the shadow, they drop the fubstance.

Such, and many more, are the mistakes of men, in the pursuit of happiness. They all originate from a defertion of truth and simplicity; from a neglect of God and grace; from vanity, pride, folly, and vice.

But even the wife, the virtuous, the religious, and the comparatively happy, are still no more than men; and, being men, are subject to much real mifery, to bodily pains, diseases, infirmity, decay, and worldly losses and crosses. The gardens of the world produce only deciduous flowers. Perennial ones must be sought in the delightful regions of Heaven. Roses without thorns are the growth of Paradife alone.

Thither then let us repair. And happily, we are called by an invitation, no less urgent than kind and merciful. " Come unto me," fays a friendly voice, " all ye that labour and are heavy laden,

"and I will give you rest*." Let us consider the words properly, and allow them their sull weight upon our hearts. The Redeemer of mankind, commissioned from the Creator, utters, from his own mouth, the gracious summons, "Come unto me." As if he had said:

"Your own wisdom, your own endeavours, unaffisted, are insufficient to secure your happiness,
and rescue you from miser. Come unto me, all ye
that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give
you rest." And who is there among us that does
not labour? and who is there that is not heavy
laden? and who does not want rest in the pilgrimage of life? The burden of our sins, the burden
of our diseases, the burden of our years, press
heavily on us, and gladly would many resign their
lives in weariness, if there were no danger of a
world unknown; where heavier burdens may await
him who impatiently throws down the load of life.

Thanks be to God that Jesus Christ will either lighten our load, or give us strength to bear it. He has reconciled us to God; he has taught us to consider our Maker as our friend and father; and that all things will work together for our good. "Who will shew us any Good?" Jesus Christ has shewn us our SUPREME GOOD.

At his departure from us, he left us not alone; but fent his comforter to us—the Holy Spirit of God; who will continue with all true Christians, even to the end of the world. It is he who preferves a lively, energetic devotion in us; and not only fanctifies and comforts, but illuminates our fouls with the beams of grace. The happiness of man, after all that has been said upon it, depends

^{*} Matt. xi. 28.

upon a participation of this holy affistance; upon the divine paraclete, the God of consolation: and the misery of man is SPIRITUAL DESERTION.

Here then let us rest. Adieu to the distraction of philosophy; the never-ceasing disputes of unassisted reason; the dogmatical decisions of learned pride and empty-vanity. To be happy, we must be blessed with the Holy Spirit. In adversity, in prosperity, in sicknows, and in health, our joys will be pure, our sorrow lightened with this holy emanation of the Deity in our bosoms. Natural evil we must feel; moral evil, and its effects, we shall often experience; but there will still remain in our hearts, if regenerated, a cordial drop, a source of sweet enjoyment, of which no external circumstances can utterly deprive us.

The method of obtaining this bleffing, is to perform our duty to ourselves, our neighbours, and our God, with pure hearts, and a fincere desire to conform to the will of our Maker. Much time must be given to devotion; more to the offices of charity; much to works of industry in our calling or profession; while some may be indused to innocent diversion. The heart will be thus renovated, and that change produced in our dispositions, which is termed, in scripture, the becoming a new man; and, in the language of theology, regeneration.

Little do they know, who are involved in the continual hurry and diffipation of the world, of this wonderful change in human nature, and its heightening effect on the enjoyment of life. Business and diversions can afford no delight comparable to the sweet sensations of a foul composed and tranquillized by divine grace. In this state, a charming serenity diffuses itself over the mind, which becomes like those

happy climes of poefy, where every breeze is gentle as a zephyr, the fpring perpetual, and the earth teems, at the same time, with flowers of the finest hue, and fruits of the most delicious flavour. Nothing subtunary, indeed, is perfect; but there is every reason to believe, that the state of the regenerated Christian approaches as nearly to the bliss of Heaven, as it is possible, while the soul is encumbered with a mortal body.

We fet out in fearch of happiness, and here we have found it. The question "who will shew us "any good "?" is now answered. The CHIEF GOOD of man is a state of grace. Other pretentions to it are like shadows to the substance; which they may refemble in shape, while they want its essence, its duration, its folidity. What we have found, let us never lofe. Let us build upon a rock. Let us daily grow in grace; and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jefus Christ. Thus shall our happiness in this life, founded, as it will be, in piety, virtue, and the consequent favour of God, rife to more perfect happiness in a future state, where the passions and appetites of a mortal body shall not weigh down the pure ethereal Spirit that, in its prefent state, with wings all too feeble, continually aspires at its native clime.

Come then, ye who have wandered like bleating sheep, distressed and famished, without a shepherd, come to Jesus Christ, to the shepherd of your souls, who shall feed you in a green passure, and by the river side. Come unto him, for he calls you, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and he shall give you rest; rest, in your passage through this turbulent scene; and not only rest, but sulness of joy at his right hand, when your wearied bodies shall lie down in the peaceful grave.

^{*} Pfalm iv.

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SECTION LVII.

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Apologetical Conclusion; with a Recapitulation, and Addition of a few Particulars respecting the preceding Subjects.

The world, on a superficial view of it, prefents an appearance of gaiety. Deeply engaged in the pursuit of gain, honour and amusement, sew men would lament, like Calypso in Telemachus, if they were immortal, and doomed to remain, in everlasting youth and health, on this low orb, wretched as it is represented. But as all are conscious that this is impossible, the next endeavour is to drown thought in the whirlpools of dissipation. Most persons, however, choose to be called Christians, and would be not a little disgusted with the officious monitor, who should venture to suggest to them that, as they seldom or never bestow on Christianity the least solicitude, they can have no just pretensions to the name.

But bufy as men are, in pursuits foreign to piety, it is certain, that after a few short years, the principal concern of the proudest, bravest, and fairest of the sons and daughters of Adam, will be religion. To that friend, whom many slight in the season of youth, health, and prosperity, they will (secretly, perhaps, but eagerly) sly for succour, in the time of age, forrow, sickness, and death. What, indeed, is man, in his most slourishing state? What, the most admired and distinguished individual of us all, but an infirm, dependent creature, subject, from the cradle, to

ten thousand evils; doomed gradually, often painfully, to decay, and certainly, perhaps most deplorably, to die? Second childhood, idiotism, infanity, palsy, blindness, deafness, lameness! ye are powerful preachers to those who mark well your ravages among the sons of men, once most highly distinguished for strength, comeliness, genius, all that charms the heart, and dazzles the imagination with transfent brilliancy.

"Think, mortal," fays the poet, "what it is to die." Think also, I add, what it is to see those whom we love, die before us; die, agonized with pain, after languishing with lingering disease; to attend them, with all the blandishments of affection, without being able to contribute to their ease, or add one moment to their existence. Is there any partaker of human nature, however thoughtless, who, when he feels, actually brought home to his own bosom, or to his family, the real calamities, the fore diffresses of life, will not be anxious to feek comfort of religion, to acquaint himself with God, and be at peace with him? His prospect in the world is forlorn and dismal. It is a barren land, where no water is. Though it flattered him in better days, it now turns away from him in the hour of his atmost need. Indeed, if it were still inclined to footh him, it has no cordials for his heart, no ballams for his wounded fpirit. To Heaven only he can look for comfort*,

^{*} As examples of men well known, and recently in the land of the living, teach more effectually than any precepts and admonitions, I have felected the two following, to flew how men of the world and men of pleasure are affected by disease and the decays of age.

and there he will not feek it in vain. Religion has confessedly furnished a sweet solace, under extreme

The following verses, a translation of a Psalm, by the late Mr. Colman, who had been much conversant with the gay world, exhibit the state of mind to which the liveliest wits and men of fashion may be reduced, on a sudden, by sickness, by a stroke of the palsy, or any other malady.

- " Pfalm the 30th imitated in blank verse :
- " I will take heed, "I faid, I will take heed,
- " Nor trespass with my TONGUE; will keep my mouth
- " As with a bridle, while the finner 's near.
- " -Silent I mus'd, and e'en from good refrain'd,
- " But full of pangs, my heart was hot within me;
- "The lab'ring fire burst forth, and loos'd my tongue.
 "Lord, let me know the measure of my days:
- " Make me to know how weak, how frail I am!
- " My days are as a fpan, mine age as nothing,
- " And man is altogether vanity.
- " Man walketh in an empty fhade; in vain
- " Disquieting his foul, he heaps up riches,
 - " Knowing not who shall gather them. And now
 - " Where rests my hope, O Lord! it rests with thee,
- " Forgive me mine offences! Make me not
- " A scorn unto the foolish! I was dumb,
- " And open'd not my mouth, for 'twas thy doing.
- " O, take thy STROKE away! thy hand destroys me.
- When, with rebukes, thou chastenest man for fin,
- " Thou mak'st his beauty to confume away :
- " Distemper preys upon him, as a moth
- · Fretting a garment. Ah, what then is man?
- " Ev'ry man living is but vanity!

letters:

- " Hear, hear my prayer, O Lord! O hear my cry!
- " Pity my tears! for I am in thy fight
- But as a stranger and a sojourner,
- " As all my fathers were. O, spare me then,
- " Though but a little, to regain my ftrength,
- Let us hear also LORD CHESTERFIELD, a complete man of the world. The following is an extract from one of his

I have

treme affliction, when the heart fickened at the pleasures of the world, and viewed its pageantries

"I have run," fays he, " the filly rounds of business and pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the pleasures of the world, and consequently know their stuility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low. Whereas those that have not experienced, always over-rate them. They only see their gay outside, and are dazzled with the glare. But I have been behind the scenes. I have seen all the coarse pullies and dirty ropes which exhibit and move the gaudy machines; and I have seen and smelt the tallow candles which illuminate the whole decoration, to the association and admiration of the ignorant audience.

"When I reflect on what I have feen, what I have heard,
and what I have done, I can hardly perfuade myfelf that
all that frivolous hurry of buftle and pleafure of the world
had any reality; but I look upon all that is passed, as one
of those romantic dreams, which opium commonly occasions; and I do by no means defire to repeat the nauseous
dose, for the sake of the fugitive dream.

"Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy fituation with that meritorious conftancy and refignation which most peothe ple boast of? No; for I really cannot belp it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no!—I think of nothing but killing Time the best way I can, now that he is become my enemy.—It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of the journey."

"You fee," fays Bishop Horne, remarking on this passage, in how poor, abject, and unpitied a condition, at a time when he most wanted help and comfort, the world lest him and he lest the world."

Compare these words with those of another person, who took his leave of the world in a very different manner.

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have
finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth
there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the
Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day."

St. PAUL.

with contempt. Bitterer than worm wood has been the cup of adversity; but religion has infused a honied drop into it, which has overcome the bitterness: gloomy as midnight has been the lowering sky, but religion has tinged the clouds with gold and purple, and opened a prospect of the blue expanse.

But what religion? There is no religion but the Christian, which, in the present state of society, can make any claim to general reception. There is none but the Christian which can afford the smallest consolation. Explode Christianity, as some pretenders to benevolence seem to wish, and you rob the blind of their surest guide, and the wretched, of their best friend and protector. You take away the staff of age, the chart and compass of youth, the pillow of pain, the grand column and ornament of human life. Man degenerates, without it, to a brute of superior sagacity to do mischief, and superior sensibility to suffer pain.

But there are many, and those able and distinguished men in the business of the world, who appear to reject Christianity entirely. Many give it no attention*; but contented with the decencies of life, and, coldly complying with the outward forms, claim a merit in submitting quietly to its ordinances, and making no open opposition to it. Others profess to believe all religions equally true, equally salse, and equally useful to the politician. Most of these are probably driven, at last, by their

distress,

^{*} They know nothing about it, and therefore cannot defire or study it. IGNOTI NULLA CUPIDO.—The people perish through lack of knowledge. Hosea, iv. 6 The Indians prefer any bauble, which rattles and looks fine, to their mines of gold.

diffress, in the evil days, and in the anguish of their hearts, to feek the aid of her, whom they despised or neglected in prosperity, and to take refuge, during the storm, in the shelter of the temple. But is it not defirable, in every stage of life, to be under the protection of one, who is found fo faithful a friend in the last stage? And is it not the part of every truly benevolent man, if opportunities offer, and more particularly, if his PROFESSIONAL DUTY not only justifies, but demands, an active interference in promoting the folid happiness of others, to endeavour to persuade his fellow-creatures to feek, in the most effectual manner, the light and confolation of Christianity? He can in no possible mode contribute so much to the melioration of fociety, and the improvement of the human race. Look at a neighbouring country, and fee the mifery confequent on renouncing Christianity. Mercy and Justice seem to have fled from the land, together with the Gospel. God hath avenged his cause in a most awful manner.

To stop the progress of insidelity, to resuscitate the dormant spirit of vital religion, the true nature of Christianity must be plainly pointed out to the mass of the people, the GREAT as well as the vulgar; the GREAT, I say, to whom, from thoughtlessess, and immersion in sensuality, it is often little known*, however it may be professed.

* What is the GOSPEL? "The record that God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in his fon." I John, v. 2. It is a question of prime importance. Yet there are able men, and men of singular address and dexterity in all political and commercial business, who perhaps never asked the question with seriousness; and who seem to be merely novices, or downright Ignoramuses, in the school of Christ.

Christi.

Christianity, indeed, it may be suspected, is tooimperfectly understood, even by scholars, philosophers, and statesmen of the first rank, and the greatest celebrity.

To

* Let fuch persons consider the economy of grace, as thus briefly displayed by Bishop Warburton, who nevertheless, was a great opposer of the true doctrine of divine energy; and who, on that account, may have the more weight with many.

"The bleffed Jesus came into the world to declare the good-will of our heavenly Father to the forfeited posterity of Adam. He testified the truth of his mission by amazing miracles; and sealed the redemption of mankind, by the more amazing devotion of himself to an ignominious death. But as the redemption, so generally procured, could only operate on particulars, under certain circumstances of faith and obedience, very repugnant to our corrupted nature, the blessed Jesus, on his leaving the world, premised his followers his intercession with the Father, to send another divine person—the Holy Ghost, called the Spirit of Truth, and the Comforter—who, agreeably to the import of those names, should co-operate with us in establishing faith, and in persecting obedience; or, in other words, should sanctify us to redemption.

"This is a fuccined account of the economy of grace; entirely confonant to our best conceptions of the nature of God, and the condition of man. For if man was to be reinstated in a free gift, justly forfeited, we cannot but suppose that as, on the one hand, it might be restored on what conditions best pleased the giver; so, on the other, God would graciously provide, that it should not be best showed in vain.

"An atonement, therefore, was to be made for the of"fended majesty of the Father, and this was the work of
"the Son; and a remedy was to be provided for the misera"ble condition of man, which hindered the atonement from
"preducing its effect; and this was the office of the Holy
"Ghost;

To call the attention of men to Christianity, and to render its true genius and nature better known*, is the scope of this little book; a book by no means intended to promote the interest, or gratify the pride, of any particular division or sub-division of Christians, but to serve the common cause of all human beings, by maintaining the divine origin, describing the real essence and energy, and disfusing the powerful esseacy of that sublime Philosophy, which, under the immediate operation of an all-wise and benign Deity, promises to tranquillize life, and conduct man through paths of peace, to realms of eternal selicity,

What then is the principle of this philosophy, which gives it a decided superiority over all that has been taught in the groves of Academus, the Portico and the Lyceum? It is (as I hope has been evinced in the preceding pages) a BEAM OF

"Ghost; so that both were joint workers in the great busi-

"The office of the Holy Ghost is to enlighten the "understanding, and to rectify the will."

Bp. WARBURTON.

This is the testimony of an adversary.

"The Christian that rejects, reproaches, and writes against the necessity of immediate divine inspiration, (as Warbur-

" ton did,) pleads the whole cause of infidelity." Law-

- * "In many countries called Christian, neither Christianity, on nor its evidence, are fairly laid before men; and in places
- " where both are, there appear to be some, who have very
- " little attended to either; and who reject Christianity, with
- " as scorn proportionate to their inattention; and yet are by no means without understanding in other matters."

Bp. BUTLER.

"I have been so long conversant with the classics," said Dr. Convers Middleton, "that I grow squeamish when I come to the scriptures,"

LIGHT from the FATHER OF LIGHTS; a LUMEN DE LUMINE, LIGHT OF LIGHT; the breath of the power of God, restoring degenerate human nature to that image which it lost at the fall, and reestablishing it in primeval dignity. The Holy Ghost, it appears, is the divine Being, now and for ever engaged in effecting this happy renovation; in producing a change, which no humanwisdom could ever accomplish, without supernatural assistance, without that GIFT, which our Lord gave to men after his ascension.

The elegant refinements of human philosophy may furnish a pleasing amusement for those who possess the advantages of a classical education, and of literary leisure. The Christian Philosophy alone is calculated for ALL mankind; this alone can bring peace* at the last; peace, during the continuance of life, as well as its close; a transcendent peace, called, in scripture, the peace of God, which passes all understanding; and which certainly constitutes that supreme Good of MAN, in selecting which, human philosophy could never yet finally agree. Happily, it is a kind of philosophy, to which every human being, consistently with God's equity, may attain; requiring not cultured intellect, nor a life of academical seclusion, but

JOHN EDWARDS.

^{* &}quot; I would," faid the great Grotius, whose book,
On the Truth of the Christian Religion, is recommended to all young students, though, I believe, it never convinced any man living; "I would," faid he, a little before he died, " give all my learning and honour, for the plain integrity " and innocence of JEAN URICK;" a poor illiterate neighbour of his, who spent much of his time in prayer, and was an hopest plain man, and industrious in his calling.

faithful, fervent prayer, accompanied with fincere, though imperfect obedience. "If ye, being "evil," fays our Saviour, "know how to give good "gifts unto your children, how much shall your "heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them "that ask him?" Nothing is to be desired by mortal man, in comparison with this gift, the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ*. The END, it appears, to be pursued by this philosophy, is the attainment of the Spirit's influence; the MEANS, prayer and obedience. Such is the sum and substance of Christian Philosophy; a titlet which I have chosen, because, from a strange perverseness,

* Phil. i. 19.

† This name Christianity bears in the writings of some of the ancient fathers. Thus Justin Martyr, speaking of Christianity, says,

" Εςι τω οντι ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ μεγισον κίημα η τιμιωτα" τον Θεω, ωτε ωροσαγει και συνισησιν ημας μουνη η ή
" οσιοι ως αληθως ουτοι εισιν οι Φιλοσοφια τον νουν ωροσεχη
" κ) οτες."

Dialog: cum Tryph.

He adds, that he found this philosophy, meaning the CHRISTIAN, the only philosophy that was useful, and to be depended upon.

"Tauthy mount sugioner Didocopian acpadate no cum"Pogor."

IBID.

IGdore alla terme Christianite the name and examples.

Isidore also terms Christianity the NEW and evangelical philosophy.

" Η νεα κή ευαγ[ελικη ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ."

EPIST. lib. 5.

And in another place he calls it the heavenly philosophy.

" ΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΣ ΦΙΛΟΣΟΦΙΑ."

EPIST. lib. 4.

Several other fathers call it the Christian Philosophy. Vide Sozomen. Eccl. Hist. lib. 5. cap. 12.

perveriencis, a great part of the world, too often guided by names, is willing to liften to philosophy, while it closes the iron doors of prejudice against the voice of religion.

The divine energy announced to mankind in the glad tidings of the Gospel, under the name of GIFTS and GRACE, operating, now and for ever more, on every human heart prepared to admit it, appears, from what has been advanced in these pages, to be the LIVING, EVERLASTING GOSPEL, still accompanying the written word, and conveying illumination, fanctification, confolation. It would not cease to operate, being fent down from Heaven on our Lord's ascension, even if it were possible that ink and paper, by whose instrumentality the written word is transmitted, were utterly loft. It originates from Omnipotence, and cannot entirely rely, for its continuance or effect, on means merely human, weak, contingent, and perishable. He who once views the gospel-of Jesus Christ in this light; he who confiders it as a vital influence from Heaven, and recognizes its energy on his heart, as he will do, in confequence of prayer and obedience, will want no other proof of the truth and excellence of Christianity. He will have the witness in himfelf; and stand in no need of the schoolmen's folios, the verbal subtleties of the critic, or the acrimonious disputes of the polemic. He will

[&]quot; Non tam discendo, quam PATIENDO divina,

[&]quot; MENS PERFICITUR HUMANA."

[&]quot;Homines ideo fallantur, quod aut religionem suscipiunt, omissa sa sapientia, aut sapientia soli student, omissa religione, cum alterum since altero esse non possit verum."

LACTANTIUS de falfa Sapient. lib. 3.

find, that some of the most learned men, the most voluminous writers on theological subjects, were TOTALLY IGNORANT OF CHRISTIANITY. He will find, that they were ingenious heathen philosophers, assuming the name of Christians, and forcibly paganizing Christianity, for the sake of pleasing the world, of extending their same, and enjoying secular honours and lucrative preeminence*.

"Godly perfons," that is, Christian philosophers, are described, in those articles which all churchmen have most folemnly affented to, as " fuch as FEEL in themselves the Spirit of Christ, " mortifying the works of the flesh, and drawing " up their minds to high and heavenly things." He who feels the Spirit in him, will be conscious of possessing the pearl of great price, and will lock it up in the fanctuary of his heart, as his richest treasure, never to be despoiled of it by the seducing arts of false philosophy; never to exchange that pure gold, which is the fame yesterday, today, and for ever, for the base metal of worldly politicians, who may endeavour, as they have done, to make truth herfelf alter her inimitable nature, to serve the varying purposes of temporary ambition. Those doctrines of Christianity,

* "There are those," fays the apostle, who seek THEIR "OWN, and not the things of Jesus Christ." PHIL. ii. 21.

Such as these are called by Ignatius 28154 2001, dealers and chapmen in Christ. Unprositable TRUTHS they will have no more to do with, than traders with unsaleable commodities.

Bishop Horne says, "Those clergymen, who betray the cause of their Master, in order to be promoted in the church, are guilty of the worst kind of simony, and pay their souls for the purchase of their preferment."

which were true under the first Charles, will be considered, notwithstanding the subtle attempts of politicians, equally true under the abandoned profligacy of a second; or in subsequent reigns, when it was discovered by the court divines, that Christianity was as old as the creation, and the religion of grace, a mere republication of the religion of nature*. The substance of Christianity

* This, though the pious Sherlock's doctrine, is hearly the fame with the infidel Voltaire's, though not quite fo honourable to Christianity.

Notre religion revelle n'est memes et ne pouvoit ceres que

Difcours fur le Theisme, par M. de Voltaire.

Of preaching natural religion for Christianity, let us hear
the opinion of two other celebrated divines, and pious men-

" Scarce any thing," fays Dr. Trapp, " has of late years been more prejudicial to religion, than the neglect of the

" THEOLOGICAL part of it, properly fo called: and it is

wery greatly to be lamented, that some writers, even of

our own church, out of an undue terror, in opposing some undue doctrines of Calvin, have run into the other ex-

" treme, and have too little regarded the necessary dostrines

" of religion."

They have dwelt upon the agenda, and totally neglected the credenda.

"To preach practical fermons, as they are called, that is,

" fermons upon VIRTUES and VICES, without inculcating

" those great scripture truths of redemption, orace, and the

46 like, which alone can incite and enable us to forfake fin, 46 and follow after righteousness—what is it but to put toge-

" ther the wheels, and fet the hands of a watch, forgetting

" the spring which is to make them all go?"

Bishop HORNE and Dr. TRAPF, in his Preface to "Prefervative."

What Quintilian faid, may be applied to moral preaching, when unaccompanied with evangelical.

tianity can survive the wreek of empires, and demolition of temples made with hands, and the dismission of a superstitious or a time-serving priesthood. The living temple of the heart, where the Holy Spirit fixes his shrine, will stand unimpaired, amidst the fallen columns of marble. The kingdom of Heaven will remain unshaken, amidst all the convulsions of this changeable globe. We are told, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and, though it should happen, in any country of Christendom, that the rulers should be infidels, and the vifible church abolified; yet while there are human creatures left alive in it, the CHURCH of CHRIST may still flourish. The doctrine of grace is the only doctrine which tends. to preserve Christianity in the world, independent of the caprice and pride of statesmen* and philosophers, or the wickedness of the people. Who shall be impious enough to maintain that God cannot preserve, by his own methods, his own dispensation?

Civil and ecclesiastical power in union, together with the assistance of an early education, may, indeed, retain, in a nation, the forms and the name of Christianity; but "the proper force of religion,

[&]quot; Nunc vero que velut propria philosophiæ afferunter passim ractamus omnes: quis enim modo de justo, æquo, ac bono, non et vir pessimus loquitur."

Quint. Proæmium.

^{* &}quot;With great worldly wisdom, there is always great

"pride, the greatest adversary to true and fancissied Christian knowledge. All the skill that men so minded can

attain to in heavenly matters, is but like lessons got by

rote. It must be quite forgotten, or, at least, utterly re
nounced and laid aside, before we can be admitted into the

[&]quot; school of Christ." Dr. Jackson, Vol. I. B. 2. C. 14,

" fafe."

"that force which subdues the mind, which awes
"the conscience, and influences the private con"duct, as well as the public," will only be preferved by a vital experimental sense* of the divine energy of the Holy Ghost, whom we declare, with one voice, in our churches, whenever we repeat the Nicene creed, to be the "LORD AND GIVER
"OF LIFE."

I have endeavoured to diffuse this vital, experimental sense, from a conviction that it is peculiarly desirable at a time when insidelity is said to increase, beyond the example of any former age. But I know that I oppose prejudices deeply rooted, and far extended. These doctrines are frowned upon by men in high stations. I know that our Saviour has predicted, what experience has abundantly verified, that the preaching and teaching of the TRUE gospel, will ever create enemies in the world. The modes of

" Let it be considered that man; besides the benefit of " reason to direct him, is bleffed with the advantage of some-" thing, if not always equivalent, certainly not inferior to the highest refinements of INSTINCT in lower animals; and " from the same fountain, I mean GRACE, the grace of God; " which, if any one be hardy, and UNPHILOSOPHICAL, and " unchristian enough to deny, I shall not attempt to con-" fute him; only defire him to confider calmly, whether it " be more incongruous to suppose God aiding and directing " reasonable, but fallible beings, with his GRACE, than brutes " with INSTINCTS." + " These doctrines serve no end of popular learning, they " help no people to figure and preferment in the world, and " are useless to scholastic, controversial writers." t But I must remember that, " FEAR OF MAN bringeth a " fnare; -but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be

perfecution .

PROVERBS, XXIX. 25.

persecution differ in different periods; but, in all times, the defenders of evangelical truth are exposed to some degree of it. I know it well; yet, " Woe "is me," may I and every other preacher fay, "if "I preach not the gospel*;" the true gospel; fuch, at least, as, after the most careful fearch and long confideration, it appears to my imperfect understanding, and such as I believe it to be in my sour. I only defire the adversary, if any fuch should arise, to allow the possibility that he, as well as I and the many great men who support me in my fentiments, may be mistaken! and to ask his own heart, whether he has hitherto studied the subject as a truly humble + Christian, a fallen, depraved, ignorant, and weak creature; or merely as a scholar, critic, philosopher, logician, metaphysician, controversialist, or politician, contending for the glory of victorious disputation, or the rewards of a profession established and encouraged by the state.

If any clergyman‡ of the church of England should be disposed utterly to deny the doctrine of immediate

* 1 Cor. ix. 16.

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† Antoninus taught, that the very first requisite to form a philosopher, was αποδοδλειν οιησιν, to throw away all concent of knowledge.

† The Rev. Mr. Thomas Edwards, Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, after writing a learned and elaborate book against the doctrine of grace, is compelled, by the force of truth, at the conclusion of it, to make the following concessions:

"There are undoubtedly feveral passages which sufficiently shew, that the operations of the Holy Spirit are
not to be entirely limited and confined to the extraordinary
and miraculous gifts and endowments peculiar to the apostolic age; but, on the contrary, that it will, in all succeeding ages, be communicated, in a peculiar manner, to all

O

"those

immediate grace, divine energy, and supernatural impulse, I would beg leave humbly and affectionately to remind him of the question proposed to him when he was ordained a minister of Christ, and the answer he then made, with every circumstance of religious solemnity, receiving the facrament upon it, and thus evidently resting all his hopes of God's blessing on his sincerity*.

The question is, "Do you trust that you are in-"wardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon

" those who may stand in need of it, in order to the dif-

"I can therefore by no means give into their opinion, who, with the witty French Jesuit, look upon these super-

onatural workings of the Spirit upon the minds of man, as

" entirely visionary or chimerical; or, as he expressed him-

se felf, a mere NESCIO QUID, (je ne sçai quoi). A tempore Au-

" gustini, vix ulla vex frequentior fuit voce, GRATIA, ubi sermo

es est de bominis ad saniorem mentem reditu et vi, cui is reditus debees tur. Ea tamen voce quid significetur, cum ab iis quæritur, qui ea

" utuntur, nibil responsi perspicui ferre licet. Hinc factum ut in

" Gallia, Jesuita festivi ingenii, non infacete dixit, ' Gratiam

" illam divinam, quæ tantum strepitum, excitavit in scholis, et tam

" mirabiles effectus in bominum animis edit, gratiam illam adeo effi-

" cacem, et suavem simul, quæ de duritie cordis, illæsa arbitrii li-" bertate, triumphat, nibil esse tandem, præter NESCIO QUID."

Clerici, Ars Crit. p. 2. s. 1. c. 8.

"The general manner in which the Spirit operates upon

men, we may, I humbly conceive, suppose to be, by raifing such particular ideas, or making such particular impressions
upon their minds, as may influence them," &c.

* " All facerdotal power is derived from the Holy Ghost; " and they who do not acknowledge themselves under the

"Holy Ghost's influence, acknowledge that they have no

"facerdotal power. Our Saviour-himfelf took not the mi-

" niftry upon him, till he had this confecration."

We think too lovely of the priest's office in our age. Very great it is, under the energy of the Holy Ghost.

" you

"you this office and ministry, to serve God, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" "I TRUST so," replies the person to be ordained.

As the topic is rather invidious, and certainly concerns myself as well as any of them whom I have the honour to call my brethren in the profeffion, I will refer it to Bishop Burnet, to make remarks on the response to the interrogatory. "Certainly," fays the truly able prelate, "the " answer that is made to this, ought to be well con-" fidered; for if any one fays, 'I trust fo,' that yet " knows nothing of any fuch motion, and can give no "account of it, he lies to the Holy GHOST, " and makes his first approach to the altar with a "lie in his mouth; and that not to men, but to " God. Shall not God reckon with those who " run without his mission, PRETENDING that they " trust they have it, when perhaps they understand "not the importance of it? nay, and perhaps " fome LAUGH at it, as an enthusiastical question, " who yet will go through the office. They come " to Christ for the loaves; they hope to live by the " altar and the gospel, how little soever they serve " at one, or preach the other: therefore they will " fay any thing that is necessary for qualifying them " to (receive the loaves and fishes), whether true or " false." The Bishop's animadversion is severe; and every man's own conscience must whisper to him, in his own case, whether it be just and true.

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One thing, however, is certain, and fufficient for my purpose. It is plain that persons who enter on the ministry, thus declaring themselves to believe that they are under a supernatural motion or impulse, cannot consistently deny, or explain away, the main main principle of my book, which is the reality of fuch a supernatural motion or impulse. They confess that, in their own persons, they believe they have experienced that divine energy of the Holy Ghost, which, I maintain, moves the mind to believe in Christ, and inclines the heart to all moral virtue.

If the fublime and comfortable doctrine of immediate grace were generally preached, the churches would be better frequented, and infidelity rare*. The common people, unspoiled by vain philosophy, hunger and thirst for the spiritual food which comes down from Heaven. Ought not their shepherds to feed them with such as is convenient for them, and to lead them from broken cifterns and barren lands, to the green pasture, and streams of living water? Who shall judge what is most convenient for them? a few individuals, or the million, directed, in their choice, by the concurrent guidance of the church, the liturgy, and the scriptures? It has been justly fuggested, by a wit of antiquity, that the GUESTS. and not the cooks, are to judge of the tafte and

^{**} We must carry this yet further than the bare believing that these things (the dostrines of Christianity) are TRUE; such a faith devils have. We must make our people undershand, that this faith purifies the heart and works by love; and it only becomes a saving and justifying faith, when upon our entering upon the practice of those rules that this religion prescribes, we feel a real virtue derived into us, that makes us new creatures, and gives us such a vital perception of the truth of the promises made us in it, that we receive these, as earnests of our inheritance, and so taste and see that God is gracious to us. This makes us living stones in the spiritual building."

Bishop Burnet's Charge,

falubrity of the viands prepared for the table. Now the guests invited to the spiritual feast, appear, by their numerous attendance, to prefer the sood which comes from above, the truly evangelical doctrine of grace. However unskilfully dispensed, the places of worship, where it is, or appears to be, dispensed at all, are thronged with multitudes, while other places are almost deserted. How are the churches crowded by young and poor persons, at confirmations; the whole of which office is founded, most evidently, on the doctrine of grace, and the Holy Spirit's actual interposition.

The following is the bishop's prayer, in the office of confirmation: " Almighty and everlaft-" ing God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these " thy fervants, by water and the Holy Ghoft, " and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their " fins; strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily " increase in them thy manifold GIFTS OF GRACE, " the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit " of counsel and ghostly strength; the spirit of " KNOWLEDGE and true godliness; and fill them, " O Lord, with the spirit of thy holy fear, now " and for ever." The bishop then laying his hand upon every one feverally, fays, " Defend, O " Lord, this thy child, with thy heavenly grace, " that he may continue thine for ever; and daily " increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, " until he come unto thy everlafting kingdom." He proceeds thus: "Almighty and everlafting "God, who makest us both will and do those " things that be good and acceptable unto thy " divine Majesty, let thy Holy Spirit ever be with 66 them; and fo lead them in the KNOWLEDGE " and

" and obedience of thy holy word, that in the

" end they may obtain everlasting life. Vouch-

" fafe to direct, fanctify, and govern both our

" hearts and bodies," &c.

Can any bishop who reads these words, or any parish priest who sends the young ones of his slock to hear them, consistently deny the doctrine of divine energy, or immediate grace*?

Exclusively of this sublime doctrine, the Gos-PEL, confidered merely as a book of morality, has not so great an advantage over the Koran, as every Christian must wish and believe it to possess. Mahomet requires, in the KORAN, "the belief of one God, trust in him, frequent prayer and " fasting, almsgiving even to STRANGERS, keeping " of covenants, justice in dealings, patience in " adverfity; to honour father and mother, and to maintain them if they are old and poor. He forbids usury, bearing false witness, profane " fwearing, and the murdering of infants, which " had formerly been common in Arabia." The MAHOMETAN also allows Jesus to be a prophet tent from God, and commissioned to be a great instructor, reformer, and Saviour. I say, divest Christianity of the GIFT which our LORD gave to men, after his afcension, and the insidel will place Christ far below Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Seneca, and rank him with Mahomet, or even in a lower class; fince there are many who deem the Koran a very fine composition, far superior to the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

^{*} Bishop Beveridge says, "A man may as soon read the letter of the scripture without eyes, as understand the mysteries of the gospel without GRACE."

and to the epistles of Paul, the chief of the apostles.

Divest Christianity of the Spirit's energy, and you rob it of its appropriate, diftinguishing, and exclusive excellence and glory. You place it among the modes of superstition which, at various times, have been encouraged by states, in order to facilitate the movements of the political engine, in almost every country on the face of the globe. You make it the invention of man; and, as the invention of man, it will often be despised, in comparison with the philosophy which prevailed in the elegant schools of Athens and Rome, and which clothed its fine morality in all the feducing embellishments of a polished diction. The writings of Plato and Cicero will be preferred to those of the evangelists and apostles, if the PEARL which enriches the plain compositions of the latter, above all that human ingenuity can contrive, be torn from its place. That PEARL is figuratively emblematic of the Holy Spirit's influence, the UNCTION from above.

The ray of divinity, the amointing of the Spirit, shed a heavenly effulgence on the page of the written gospel, which all human lights but faintly emulate. These are merely moons or satellites. Christianity is the sun of the system. I am the light of the world, says Christ himself. Let us remember, that it is the inspiration that makes the oracle; not the priest or the shrine. Take away the spring from the time-keeper, and though the wheels are curiously contrived, and the gold in which it is cased, and the jewels with which it is adorned, may still be valuable, yet it will no longer be esteemed but as a costly toy, or looked

at, by those who want information, with considence. Thus the gospel will have no vital, converting effect, when considered only as an historical narrative, with moral precepts occasionally interspersed, but unaccompanied with the MINISTRATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT*.

For

* The fueces ful propagation of the gospel could not be effected by the causes assigned by Mr. Gibbon, but must have been effected by the Holy Ghost. Is it not reasonable to believe that it may now be propagated and continued by the same means as at first—the powerful agency of Heaven? Let us hear a sensible writer on the subject.

"The fole adequate cause of the successful propagation of " the gospel is, according to the scriptures, the HOLY " GHOST. It will be well if his agency, in these polite and rational days, be thought to deferve a moment's attention-"Yet it is evident, that there must be some cause for this " wonderful phenomenon. I shall not disgust the rational " world, by supposing the agency of any supernatural being " in the affair, but that of the great Author of Nature. Any " Spirit inimical to him could not, and any Spirit obedient " to his authority would not, produce a character of fuch GOOD-" NESS, but under his authority, and by a power derived " from himself. Even miracles cannot change the beart, what-" ever effect they may have on the judgment; and the ruling " providence of God, implying only an external government, " does not influence the will; as facts abundantly testify. " All that is rational and buman is totally unequal to the task; " nay, perhaps the most fensible of mankind, should they " deign to honour these sheets with their inspection, can " scarce bear the idea of a real Christian with patience. "There is an ENERGY more than human which produces " this character; and it remains that this must be the IN-" FLUENCE OF THE HOLY GHOST.

"The reader who will allow himself seriously to weigh this subject, may see that nothing short of this could constitute one real Christian, in this or any other age of the church. Let him consider, whether it is even possible

For political and interested purposes, it may be talked of in churches and universities; it may be scholastically defended, and generally professed, and yet totally misunderstood and misreprefented. It will have no influence* on the hearts

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" for mere man to invent fuch dostrines; much less to pro-" pagate them with any fuccess, in a world like this. A " number of men, possessed of a fixth sense, of which we " had not the least idea, would find but few brought over to " their opinion that they were possessed of such a sensation. "Their pretentions would be conftrued into pride or folly; " but those whom the Most High should endow with the " fame fenfation, would eafily believe. The application is " obvious.

" Thus we have a simple and obvious proof of the truth of " Christianity (the propagation of it by the influence of the " Holy Ghost). I fear, indeed, it will weigh but little with " those who love not the real Gospel. The generality will " fay, 'At this rate the majority of those who call them-" felves Christians, DO NOT EVEN KNOW THEIR OWN RE-" LIGION.' It is devoutly to be wished that this were not " the cafe; that even MANY THAT HAVE WRITTEN ABLY " IN DEFENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, HAD THEMSELVES " KNOWN ITS NATURE. Much of the advantage which " deifm has gained then had been prevented; we should " have had more of the EXPERIMENTAL PROOF; and that " scripture had been better known, "He that believeth in " the Son of God, hath the witness in himself.' (1 John, " v. 10.) Sceptical doubts will vanish before stubborn facts. "Were the gospet itself understood, little time need be spent on its " EVIDENCES. One fight of the fun is sufficient to point out " its glorious Author. In all things elfe, EXPERIENCE is al-" lowed to be the best schoolmaster; in religion only it is. " called enthusiasm." MILNER.

* " Judas Iscariot knew Jesus Christ-all that he did-just " in the fame manner (though much better) as a mere HISTO-" RICAL believer of the Gospel; a mere learned theologist. 0 3

of men: no, not on the hearts of the very perfons who thus talk of it, profess it, defend it; nor of those who read or listen to the most elaborate apologies, defences, and demonstrations*. Christ must

" All knowledge of Christ, but that which is by divine in-

" spiration, or the new birth, is but as poor and profitless as

" the knowledge of Judas Iseariot." LAW-

" The empty, letter-learned knowledge, which the natu" ral man can as easily have of the facred scriptures and reli-

" gious matters, as of any other books or human affairs,

" being taken for divine knowledge, has spread such darkness

" and delufion all over Christendom, as may be reckoned no

" less than a general apostasy from the gospel state of divine

" illumination." IBID.

"The best ability of the natural man can go no farther than talk, and notions, and opinions about scripture words

" and facts; on these, he may be a great critic, an acute lo-

" gician, a powerful orator, and know every thing of the

" feripture, EXCEPT THE SPIRIT AND THE TRUTH."

LAW.

* " He who goes about to speak of the mystery of the

" Trinity, and does it by words and names of man's invention, talking of effences and existences, hypostases and per-

" fonalities, priority in co-equalities and unity in pluralities,

" may amuse himself, and build a tabernacle in his head,

" and TALK fomething, he knows not what; but the good

" man, that TRELS the POWER OF THE FATHER, and to

" whom the Son is become wisdom, fanctification, and re-

" demption, in whose heart the Love of the Spirit of

"God is shed abroad, this man, though he understands no-

" ftands the Christian doctrine of the Trinity."

Bp. TAYLOR, on John, vii. 17.

Miserable and disgraceful have been the rancorous disputes on the Trinity; a subject, one would think, which, if worldly sentiments did not interpose, might be discussed with perfect composure of temper. The enemy has triumphed, while Christians have been tearing each other in pieces on an Opinion. "But must be formed in the soul, before the soul can recognize the truth and essicacy of Christianity.

Nearly two thousand years have elapsed fince the written Gospel was promulged; and it has appeared to stand in need of defences and apologies to this very hour. Nor have defences or apologies been deficient in number or in fagacity Fabricius reckons up feveral and erudition. hundred books in defence of the Christian religion. Diligent as he was, he has omitted many; and fince his time, there has been a very confiderable addition to the number. Yet the cause is said still to labour; and appearances justify the affertion. Accordingly, we have lately feen ingenious theologists, and excellent writers, called forth, by the exigencies of the times, in our own country, almost two thousand years after the origin of Christianity, and after all the preceding labours of divines, to display its evidences, as if it were the production of yesterday. Such a display is faid to be more necessary than ever; and Europe has produced many excellent works of the kind. Such books furnish exercise for the schools. May they be efficacious, as they are learned and ingenious! May they carry conviction to the heart, produce a lively faith, and refute the gainfayers! If they should fail, their failure must not be attributed to any defect of abilities in their authors, but to the omission of the internal evidence of the Holy Spirit. They are, almost without excep-

MILTON.

[&]quot; But rife ; let us no more contend, nor blame

[&]quot; Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere; but strive,

[&]quot; In offices of love, how we may lighten

[&]quot; Each other's burden, in our share of woe."

tion, above the reach, and difgusting to the taste, of the multitude; and let it be duly remembered, that to mere human reason and human learning, the inside is ever ready to oppose weapons from the same armoury. His heart must be pierced with the two-edged sword of the Spirit, before he will surrender to Faith the citadel of his own reason*.

But

* The celebrated pamphlet, entitled, Christianity not founded on Argument, was certainly nothing more than a piece of irony. Nevertheless, many a truth is told in jest; and ridentem dicere werum quid vetat?

I allow that Christianity is not founded on Argument; and I make the concession willingly, because I know that it has a better foundation. Christianity is not built on sand; but, like the house of the wise, on the rock—even the rock of ages. I will quote the words of the ironical adversary, and let them avail as much as they can.

" No man can fay that Jefus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghoft. " Here is pointed out to us that great dicator and infallible " guide we have been feeking for, and, indeed, the only " character we can possibly think of, any way equal to such " a province. It could be nothing less than omniscience and " omnipresence itself; nothing but this inexhaustible fountain " of all truth, that could be sufficient to such a demand; " and he it is, the promifed oracle, who is to attend the charge " of believers to the end of the world; to keep alive his " divine light constantly in their hearts; not to teach them " rudiments of logic, but to irradiate their fouls at once " with a thorough conviction; and perform more by one " fecret whifper, than a thousand clamorous harangues from " the schools. From the fatisfaction consequent to the mind " from his performance of this great office, it is, that he is of fo eminently flyled the Comforter; as his operations are in " another place very strongly and significantly termed the power of God unto Salvation. He that believeth in the Son of

" God, bath the witness in bimself. In this sense it is, that we

" are properly styled the temples of the Holy Ghost; the con-

But however the works now alluded to may fucceed in carrying conviction to the hearts of men.

"feerated scenes of his constant residence, there ever per-"fonally present, and dispensing his certain intelligences to the soul, which the apostle calls the witnessing of the Spirit

" with our Spirit."

"It were endless to recount all the innumerable passages," throughout the scripture, that concur in ascertaining the same supernatural and all-sufficient source and origin of our faith, in opposition to all the seeble aids and uncertain advices that reason might possibly contribute to the purpose. For we may observe, that in mentioning the principle of saith, we are always informed, both what it is, and what it is not. By grace ye are saved, through saith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. No man can come to me, (says Chrish,) except it be given him of my Father.

"The motive which induces me to receive the mysterious truths of the Gospel, is the peculiar grant and munificence of Heaven, over and above the common privileges of our nature. It seems, by the particular negatives every where so industriously dispersed through all the expressions which treat of this subject, that it was apprehended that there might possibly happen, amongst the unwary, some mistake on the occasion; and that therefore, as it was an article of so great concern to have a just notion of, the greatest imaginable care was taken, by the most precise and emphatical terms that could be devised, to guard against any such stall consequence.

"But the strongest confirmation of all these positive and repeated revelations on the point, the plainest declaration and direction what kind of evidence Christians were always to trust to and rely on, for the information and assurance of their minds, we may find summed up, in brief, in their Master's last instructions at parting. The Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, be shall testify of me. As we have both the same person and commission elsewhere again specified. The Spirit, whom I shall send, shall lead you into all truth.

men, it is certain that different perfons, in different ranks of life, with various degrees of natural fensibility and intellectual improvement, will be ftruck, respectively, with different arguments, and actuated by diverse modes of persuasion. A learned defence or proof of Christianity, which is extolled by fome, shall appear to others dull, lifelefs, and totally foreign to the purpose. What is flighted by the few, may convince the many. On reading the book of the world, as a comment on the books of the library, and turning over the pages of experience, as a criterion of written wisdom, I think I have observed that critical and historical evidence, in Christian theology, however it may edify the scholar, has little or no good effect on the multitude. By them it is feldom attended to at all; very imperfectly understood when attended to; and, when both attended to and understood, more frequently raifes doubts and fuspicions, than produces firm belief, and that HOLY FRAME of mind which regulates the conduct of life, and supplies a heartfelt satisfaction. The poor, who are the major part of human beings, in all ages and countries, and to whom our Saviour particularly addressed his preaching, seldom know that books of critical theology exist, and

[&]quot;But, not to stand for ever transcribing particulars, I "refer you once more to the GREAT ORIGINAL, which will, "I think, readily save us, both all farther trouble in quota-

[&]quot;tions and comments, and abundantly evince, in opposition

tions and comments, and abundantly evince, in opposition to all the evalive constructions which may be imposed on

^{**} particular passages, that HE (the Spirit) was in general,

[&]quot;to inspire conviction as well as bolines; and to illu-

[&]quot; MINATE as well as SANCTIFY our hearts."

would certainly never become Christians, or have a just idea of what is meant by Christianity, if they were not addressed in a manner more authoritative, and more divinely influential*.

Different

" It is worth our observing, that when the apostle calls " upon his brethren not to be carried about with strange doc-" trines, he offers this as a preservative: It is a good thing " that the heart be ESTABLISHED with GRACE. Heb. xiii. 9. "This will guard us from errors, and this will directly lead " us to truth; for by the effectual influence of God's grace " and good Spirit on our minds, we shall find in ourselves a " peculiar eviction, which will prevail more than all demon-" strations; will be more apodictical than all arguments and " reasonings. I may call this a divine kind of logic, which "thoroughly confutes and convinces us, which answers all " our scruples and cavils, and wholly captivates our under-" standings; infomuch, that we are fully perfuaded of the " truth and reality of what is delivered to us.

"This, which I am now speaking of, is the very depth of " CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY. You are brought, by what I " here propound unto you, into the most INWARD RECESS-" ES OF DIVINITY. If you come to the true understand-" ing of this, you are arrived at the greatest proficiency in the " Christian religion. It cannot be so well described as it can be "experienced. The attainment of this excellency, and "the discovery, go together. There is no better way to ap-" prehend it than to possess it. Religion is better felt and " relished by practice, than it can be comprehended in the " way of speculation; as the sweetness of honey is better " known by the taste, than by the description of it.

"The real and experienced Christian differs from the spe-" culative one, as the merchant does from the chemist. The " former hath no skill in furnaces, and cannot talk of the " nature of gold, or the ordering of it, according to art, yet " he is rich, and hath gold enough. The latter hath rare " notions of gold, and can discourse with great skill and " quaintness about the managing of it; but yet the man is " poor,

Different methods of recommending Christianity, when they all tend to the fame beneficial end, ought to be adopted and encouraged, because they are likelier to be generally successful. One and the fame method might convince only one description of persons among the infinite variety of which the mass of mankind is composed. So long as Christian faith, Christian practice, and human happiness are more and more promoted, whofoever are the men, and whatever the books that promote them, let the benevolent man rejoice. Abstruse scholars, mathematicians, metaphyficians, and logicians, have often little relish for Christianity, till it is formed into a system, methodical, subtle, and erudite. Their religion must too often be such, and fuch only, as furnishes matter for ingenious disquisition. They are apt, in the pride of scientific improvement, to despise the simplicity of the Gospel. A religion, however, merely INTELLEC-TUAL, if there be any which may be fo denominated, is effentially different from, and inferior to, what I have in this inculcated, under the name of cordial religion. The one qualifies for degrees in an university school; the other is calculated to influence the conduct of all men, in the walks of common life; in the court, in the city, in the camp, and in the market place. High, low, rich, and poor, learned and unlearned, meet together in the school of Christ, and are

[&]quot; poor, and wants what he talks of. In like manner a true

^{*} practical Christian may be rich in grace, though he cannot telearnedly discourse of it; and a speculative Christian may

[&]quot; be truly poor, though he can talk of the spiritual riches.-

[&]quot;Aristotle wrote of the world, but his scholar conquered it."

Dr. JOHN EDWARDS.

there equally favoured with grace, and instructed in the knowledge which leadeth to salvation. Ill would it fare with mankind, if they must be linguists and historians, before they can be duly informed of the nature of that religion, which was intended for the happiness of all; and on the neglect and ignorance of which, they are obnoxious to divine displeasure.

Systematical or intellectual religion may employ the pen of a ready writer, or the tongue of a voluble disputant in the academical or ecclesiastical chair; but cordial religion, effectually, though silently; certainly, though unostentationsly; sweetens, softens, and spiritualizes, the human disposition. It may not gratify the pride or serve the worldly interest of individuals, but it elevates and refines the general nature of MAN.

How is this religion to be learned*? Not from fyftems, not from critics or metaphyficians, not from heathen historians and moralists, but by the TEACHING of God, or the divine energy of gospel grace. Such is the principle of what I have ventured to term

Christian

MATT. XVI. 15. &c.

Our Saviour does not fay that Peter had done well to form that conclusion, from reasoning on what he saw and heard;

^{*} Not by the letter, but by the Spirit, was MARY MAG-DALEN learned. And how are your family, your mother and lifter, your fervants, your poor neighbour, made Chriftians—by Dr. Clarke? by academical professors? or by the gospel accompanied with immediate grace?

[&]quot;But whom fay ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and faid, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And

[&]quot; Jefus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon

[&]quot; Bar Jona; My FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN HATH

[&]quot; REVEALED IT UNTO THEE,"

Christian Philosophy *, in contradiction to the philosophy of heathenism, and modern infidelity.

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or deriving the conviction from any human means; but he fays "FLESH AND BLOOD hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in Heaven."

* That experience is the best guide to Christian knowledge is Dr. South's opinion:

"The truths of Christ crucified are the Christian's Philosophy; and a good life is the Christian's logic; that great instrumental, introductive art, that must guide the mind into the former; and where a long course of piety, and close communion with God, has purged the heart, and rectified the will, and made all things ready for the reception of God's Spirit, knowledge will break in upon such a foul, like the sun shining in his full might, with such a victorious ray, that nothing shall be able to resist it.

"It is experience that must give knowledge in the Christian profession, as well as all others; and the knowledge drawn from experience is quite of another kind from that which shows from speculation and discourse. It is not the opinion, but the path of the just, that, the wisest of men tells us, shines more and more unto a perfect day. The obedient, and the men of practice, are those sons of light, that still outgrow all their doubts and ignorances; that still ride upon these clouds, and triumph over their present imperfections; till persuasion pass into knowledge, and knowledge advance into assurance; and all come, at length, to be completed in the beatistic vision, and a full fruition of those joys, which God has in reserve for them whom, by his grace, he shall prepare for glory."

Dr. South.

Dr. South, a man of wit and most vigorous intellect, was particularly active in decrying the doctrine of immediate grace, because the Court discountenanced those who maintained it: and therefore what he has here said must be allowed to be extorted from him, by the force of truth opposing royal influence and political religion, which paries as the wind blows.

It is CLEAR, amidst some obserity*, from the whole tenor of the gospel and epistles, that fince our Lord's afcension, the beneficial purposes of Christianity are accomplished by the continual agency and never-failing superintendance of the Holy Spirit. I would by no means proceed fo far as a writer fome hundred years ago, who, obferving the great and constant power attributed, by the written gospel, to the Holy Ghost, published a book, which he entitled, EVANGELIUM SPIRITUS SANCTI, or, the Gofpel of the Holy Ghoft; but at the same time, it appears to me evident, from the declarations of Jesus Christ, that the gospel is now chiefly efficacious, as it has been ever fince the afcention, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; the wakeful, tutelary guardian of every human creature. He may be refifted; his holy fire may be quenched; his temple may be polluted; and he may, in consequence, depart in displeasure. Happy would it be, if appearances did not justify the apprehension, that he is actually resisted, his holy fire quenched, his temple polluted, and both his displeasure and departure little regarded. It is the scope of Christian Philosophy to prevent this dreadful calamity.

To enquire now † the Spirit operates, is fruitless, if not presumptuous. It is enough for man to know, that it does operate; that, unless the words of scripture are violently tortured out of their

fays Bishop Wilson, "to subdue the pride of man; to con"vince us, that to understand them, we have need of a light
"fuperior to reason, and that we must apply to God for
help."

[†] Vocula illa guomodo," Luther used to fay, "est detestabilis."

their meaning, out of that plain sense which every reader of competent judgment and of integrity, unwarped by prejudice, must allow them to bear, the Spirit of God is at this moment effecting, in the bosoms of all who are duly prepared for its energy, the grand purpose of our Saviour's incarnation. Great indeed is the mystery: but equally mysterious are the processes of nature *. around us is mystery. Our very existence, our nutrition, the motion of a muscle in our bodies, is a wonderful areanum, too difficult to be accounted for by reason. Yet, I believe, I know, that I live, and move, and have my being, though I cannot explain the union of foul and body, the mode of alimentary supply, or the cause of musicular motion. So also the spiritual life and motion are inexplicable. But this is certain: he who believes the scriptures, must believe its reality. And he who is once truly and experimentally + convinced

* " Is the doctrine of grace more stupendous than the ve-" locity of motion given to light?"

Bp. WARBURTON.

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† " Η της ΠΕΙΡΑΣ ακείδεια κατισχυει την των λογων " σειθανοτητα." DIOD. Sic. Hift. lib. 1.

PRAYER is the means of producing this experience in reli-

"If mankind are corrupted and depraved in their moral character, and so are unfit for that state which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and if the affishance of God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature, in the degree requisite to their being qualified for that state, all which is implied in the express, though figurative declaration, Except a man be Born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:' supposing this, is it possible any

"ferious person can think it a slight matter, whether or no

i he

vinced of the Spirit's operation, will want no other EVIDENCE; and he who tastes the fruits of the Spirit, will desire no other display of the EXCELLENCE of Christianity. Thus will the purpose of my book be accomplished. The EVIDENCE and EXCELLENCE of Christianity will be FELT* and acknowledged by every man, who becomes a convert to the doctrine of grace. He will acquire a SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING; his rational faculty, as to spiritual matters, will be sublimed and refined in such a manner, as to supersede the necessity of those voluminous, far-fetched, and ela-

" he makes use of the means, expressly commanded by God,

" for obtaining this Divine Affiftance; especially since the

whole analogy of nature shews that we are not to expess

" any benefits, without making use of the appointed means

" for obtaining or enjoying them? Now Reason shews us

" nothing of the particular immediate means of obtaining fpiritual benefits. This, therefore, we must learn from

15 Revelation."—And Revelation fays, Ask and it shall be given.

BUTLER'S Anal. Part 2. c. I.

* "We not only believe it, but we FEEL it too; we feel "the comfortable influences, the facred emanations of the

"Holy Spirit upon us; more particularly at those offices of

" Devotion, wherein HE descends upon us also, as he did once

" upon our blessed Saviour, like a dove, and sheds his grace

" upon us, in some measure, with those excellencies which

" become the fons of God.

"Or rather, he descends upon us, as he did once before, upon the face of the waters, when he brought beauty and order upon that which before was nothing but deformity and confusion."

Bp. HICKMAN.

† Col. i. 9. "We pray for you that ye may be filled with "the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual un-"derstanding."—Again, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee Understanding in all things." 2 TIM. ii. 7.

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borate proofs and defences of Christianity which have been enumerated, in a long catalogue, by Fabricius; and which, one after another, like abortive productions, have dropped into the gulph of oblivion, and left Christianity just where they found it. Indeed, as defences of this kind have encreased, Christians appear to have decreased. The cavils introduced for resutation have lived, and the resutations died and been forgotten.

But doctrines which cannot be refuted by fcripture, are sometimes exploded by the illiberal means of stigmatizing them with an offensive or unpopular NAME. This practice has always been highly detrimental to the diffusion of genuine Christianity. It causes opinions to be condemned in the gross. It induces the mind of the careless, contemptuously to reject the mass, without selecting the wheat from the chaff, and, indeed, without the trouble of examination. There is a vicissitude or fashion in religious doctrines, as well as in the modes of dress and external behaviour. Such a book, says the leader of the day, is Arminian, or calvinistical, or METHODISTICAL*, and it must be cried

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^{*} BISHOP HURB is as far removed from a methodist as posfible. He is a divine, a philosopher, a scholar of the first rank; yet hear him (and let his words have weight) on the evidence of the Spirit of God on the heart of man.

[&]quot;To the SPIRIT, enlightening our understandings, purifying our wills, and confirming our faith, we must impute ALL that is good in us, ALL that proficiency in TRUE holiness, which qualifies us for the enjoyment of Heaven; and through this discipline it is, that they who forw to the Spirit, are in the end, enabled of the Spirit to reap LIFE EVERLAST"ING."

cried down by every pamphleteer or controverfialist, who is aspiring at favour and preferment.

But

"All the revelations of God's will, even to our Lord himfelf as the man Gbriff Jefus, and all the fecret illuminations
of the faithful, in all times, are to be regarded as so many
memanations from the Spirit of God, the Enlightener: all
the gradual improvements of our virtue, all the graces
which first descend upon our hearts, and then manifest
themselves in every good word and work, are the production of the same Spirit, in his office of Sanstifier: and
lastly, all the firmness and resolution we posses, under
every trial in the world, all the foretaste we have of future
favour and acceptance, all our joy and peace in believing,
are the signs and proofs of the Comforter speaking to us,
and, according to our Saviour's promise, abiding in us."

"If a ray of light break in upon us; if a new degree of knowledge be imparted to us; if we see the truth of the gospel more clearly, in any respect, than before we had done; we cannot mistake in ascribing this additional information or conviction, to the illuminating Spirit within us."

"If we perceive our devotions to be quickened, our hopes enlivened, our faith fortified, we shall not mistake (having the express promise of our Lord and Master) in ascribing these consolations of peace and and joy to the Comforter; we may regard them as the earnest and pledge of the Spirit in our hearts. (Eph. i. 14.)

"I know," continues he, "that this will appear strange to natural reason. But so the scripture has prepared us to expect they would do. For the natural man (says the Apostle) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him. (I Cor. ii. 14.) And to the same purpose, our Master himself, speaking of the spirit of truth;—"whom (says he) the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye (addressing himself to his disciples, that is, to men who walk by faith, and not by sight,) ye know him; for he dwelleth in you, and shall be in you."

Bp. Hund, Serm, 18, vol. ii.

But away with names, and the petty distinctions of religious party. Are you a Christian, or wish to be one, in deed, not in word only; for the fake of spiritual, not temporal purposes? Then drop your prejudices, and feek the SPIRIT OF CHRISTI-ANITY; not in fystems, but in the written gospel, affisted by prayer, and the pious illustrations of fincere, good men, however they may have been reviled or neglected, through prejudice, political artifice, or mistaken zeal. When you have thus found the truth, shew its influence by your charity. Be united to all Christians, as well as to Christ; and beware of making distinction, by nicknames, and thus exciting envy, wrath, malice, which are of a nature opposite to the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, and peace. Good men should join in a firm phalanx, that the evil may not triumph on their divisions. Let all who are united under the banners of Christ, hail one another as brother Christians, though they may differ on the subject of church discipline, rites, ceremonies, or even nonessential doctrine*.

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[&]quot;Setting aside many circumstances, in which men may "fafely err, there are but few truths of scripture of an effential nature; or, to speak more properly, there is but one, concerning which all believers (I mean those who deserve the name) are firmly agreed. This truth is the testimony of the word of God concerning Jesus Christ, that he came into the world to save sinners fully, freely, and eternally. So little room then, in reality, does the scripture give for the diversity of opinions, that it calls for perfect unity of sentiment; the diversity itself being owing to the corruption and blindness of human nature in the worst, as well as the remains of that corruption and blind-" ness

"If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if

" ness in the best. The evidence of this truth, whence " arises so full an agreement among believers, and such " complete satisfaction in their own minds, is far greater "than what can arise from any argumentation, in which " mankind are apt to deceive both themselves and others. "It is the evidence of internal experience. I feel myself lost " and miserable. I experience such an healthful change in " my whole moral fystem: so that, upon the whole, Chris-" tianity is the true cure of fcepticism; and to the seriously " disposed, who submit to the teaching of the Spirit, it gives " the bigheft internal evidence of its own truth. A man finds in himself naturally averse to all good, ignorant of God, and " without either love or gratitude towards him, felfish and bard-hearted with respect to his fellow-creatures. By put-"ting his trust in Christ, he has attained peace of consci-" ence, love, and new views of the glory of God. He has " experienced a real change in his affections and tempers. "Surely he must be allowed to be a competent judge of what he has felt; he may preach too, by his life, the truth " and the power of the gospel to others; and as he will find " his evidences increase more and more, he may be more "and more happy, from the consciousness of God within " him now, (Col. i. 27. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.) and the prospect of " blifs hereafter.

"If it be asked, where are such persons to be found? It is confessed their number is but rare. We may thank, for this, the contempt of the operations of the Holy Ghost, which prevails in our days. A serious desire of knowing the real truth, and a spirit of submission to this divine teaching, are things which the truth requires of all who seek it: if you refuse this, you unreasonably refuse to Christianity her own mode and order of things; you strip her of her arms, and then complain of her feebleness and impotency. But if you submit to be the scholar of Jesus indeed, you will find, by experience, whether he will not give you to know the truth, and whether the truth will not make you free."

MILNER

" any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of

" one accord, and of one mind*."

Let us confider how the hard-hearted, unconverted, depraved, and worthless part of mankind exult, while Christians, agreeing in essentials, quarrel and revile each other, not on the fubstance of religion, but on the mere shades of difference in opinion in matters of indifference. Let not the Philistines triumph. Let the olive-bearing army of peace-makers be combined under the banners of benevolence. Theirs is an unbloody crufade; theirs is the contest of love. The victories in their warfare are over fin, mifery, and death; and their crown, immortality. Let them march on to the foft harmony of Hofannas and Allelujahs, uninterrupted by the discordant din of angry contention. Are you a fincere believer? a lover of God and man? I falute you from my heart as my brother in Christ, whether, in confequence of your birth and education, you formed the creed you utter, at Rome, at Geneva, or in your closet at home. The Holy Ghost is the centre of our union; and all who are joined to him, must be affociated in love.

Under the illustrious champions of Christianity, who flourished, in England, during the last century, great were the triumphs of grace over human obduracy. The word of God was mighty, and cast down imaginations. The sword of the Spirit, a figurative sword, the only one approved by Christianity, wielded by men who, like these, fought the

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^{*} Phil. ii. 1, 2.

^{† 2} Cor. ix. v. διαλογισμους, which we render imaginations, certainly fignifies REASONINGS.

good fight of faith, has been irrefistible. But many fince their time, have let it rust in its scabbard, and used, as a substitute for it, the wooden batoon of heathen ethics and modern philosophy, in a kind of mock fight, beating the air, to the amusement of the indifferent or unbelieving spectator. The men of the world, who laugh at religion, and the pretended philosophers who reason against it, observing that the sword of the Spirit was no longer used, came forth with the renewed and increased audacity of those who love to difplay their prowefs, when there is but a feeble opposition. They sang the song of victory, and ventured to fuggest that Christianity, conscious of the badness of her cause, had surrendered in fact, though she kept up the appearance of defence, for the fake of decency, LUCRE, and political decepti-Infidelity plumed herself on her fancied conquest, and has long been endeavouring to sway her sceptre over the most polished countries of Christendom. In France, at last, she flatters herself fhe has gained a complete victory, and filenced her opponent for ever.

Let us mark and deplore the consequence to morals and society. Extreme selfishness, pride, vanity, envy, malice, hardness of heart, fraud, cunning, and the salse varnish of external decorum, hiding internal deformity, have remarkably prevailed in recent times, in the most polished regions, rendering man, as an individual, wretched and contemptible, and society comfortless and insecure. The human race has degenerated, in proportion as saith has diminished. The true spirit of Christianity, which can alone dignify human nature, and soften and liberalize the ob-

durate, contracted, selfish bosom of the mere natural, animal*, man, has not been fashionable to extol natural religion, by depreciating grace; and the result has been, a deplorable profligacy both in principle and practice.

How devoutly then is it to be wished, that this true spirit may revive; that the divine influence of the GENUINE GOSPEL† may again prevail, and melt the heart of steel, and bow the stubborn knees of the men of the world, and the wife men whom the world admires? Behold them pursuing their own petty, felfish, fordid purposes, regardless of all others, but as they serve their own interest or pleasure; neither loving God nor man, and depraved to a nature almost diabolical, by habits of fashionable voluptuousness, selfishness, and CRUELTY, authorized by the most illustrious examples in HIGH life. Behold this diabolical character transforming itself to an angel of light, by studied embellishments and polished manners, in which truth, honour, and benevolence are assumed as a cloak to cover the basest treachery,

^{*} Yuxixos.

[†] I hope the present time is not that of which the Apostle

[&]quot;The time will come, when they will not endure found doctrine. 2 Tim. iv. 3.

Men who preach against divine grace, may be said to be those whom Christ addresses in these words:

[&]quot;Ye shut up the kingdom of Heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."

MATT. XXIII. 13.

But while God's eternal truth is its foundation, and God's Holy Spirit its guard, neither violence nor treachery can subvert the kingdom of Heaven.

the vilest arts of diffimulation. Behold this character recommended, with all the charms of language, by one of the first NOBLEMEN, wits, and writers of the times, as the mark of the most folid wifdom; behold it, in confequence of recommendation fo powerful, spreading among the youth of the nation, and diffusing a polished, fplendid mifery, like the shining appearance which is feen on masses of corruption and putrescence. "Ye are the falt of the earth," fays our Saviour; evidently meaning the falt that is to preferve the world from a corrupt state, by becoming the means of grace to those who hear you preach and teach the true doctrine. How is he then the friend of man, or of his country, who obstructs the prevalence of such doctrine? Yet men, apparently good and learned, have united with the unprincipled, in placing every obstacle in the way of its diffusion among the people.

The grace of God is favourable to the tranquillity and fecurity of the state; to the community, as well as to individuals, by teaching virtue of the most beneficial kind under the strongest fanction. "The grace of God," says the apostle, "teaches "us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the "world." Yet against the prevalence of this grace of God, many pens and tongues have been employed during the last sourscore years; the pens and tongues, not of profligate insidels only, but of divines, teaching, for Christianity, a moral system of philosophy, well known * long before the

^{*} Yet the heathens themselves, mere moralists as they are often considered, had an idea of the divine energy. Remarkaable are the words of Maximus Tyrius. "Do

the nativity of Christ; and thus rendering, as far as their efforts could prevail, his gospel a super-fluous,

"Do you wonder that God was present with Socrates, friendly, and prophetic of futurity—AN INMATE OF HIS MIND?—A man, he was, pure in his body, good in his foul, exact in the conduct of his life, masterly in thinking, coloquent in speaking, pious towards God, and holy towards men."

The dostrine of divine affistance, or of the immediate operation of the heavenly Spirit on the mind of man, is so far from unreasonable, that it was maintained by some of the greatest masters of reason, before the appearance of Christianity. The heathens did not affirm that the knowledge they poffessed of theology was derived to them from reason; for Plato expressly fays it is Oswv sis Avdewrois doors, the gift of the Gods to men, -the effect of divine communication. They deemed it fupernatural, that reason should discover the will of God; a gift above nature, (δωρεων υπερ Φυσιν vinewows the Quon,) and over-coming nature in its present state of imbecility. The dead may as easily arise and walk, as the mind of man, fallen, as it is, into a state of spiritual death, raise itself to God and a divine life. Nothing can enable man to do those things which are above his natural powers, but supernatural aid, and that must come from the influence of the Deity.

It is, however, worth while to mark the DISCORDANT and inconfifient opinions of celebrated heathens on the subject of divine affistance.

" Bonus vir sine Deo nemo est."

SENECA, Epift. 41.

" Deus in bumano corpore hospitans."

Epift. 31.

Yet this same philosopher says, in another place, " Est ali" quid quo sapiens antecedat Deum. Ille natura beneficio, non suo,
" sapiens est, In one respect a philosopher excels God. God
" is obliged to nature for his wisdom, and cannot help being
" so. The philosopher thanks himself only." Epist. 53.

"Atque bot quidem omnes mortales sic babent, externas commoditates, vineta, segetes, oliveta, ubertatem frugum et frueum,

ss camena

fluous, and even ugly excrescence upon it. There is a kind of wisdom, we are told on the best authority, "which descendeth not from above, "but is EARTHLY, SENSUAL, DEVILISH*." No wonder that men, who are taught, by their instructors, to pursue this wisdom, and, in effect, to reject the gospel at the very moment they are solemnly professing it, should become (like the wisdom which they cultivate, and which the Apostle so strongly reprobates) earthly, sensual, DEVILISH. Much of the profligacy of manners in the present century is to be attributed to the desertion of the religion of our foresathers, and

omnem denique commoditatem, prosperitatemque vitz, a Diis se babere; virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit. Nii mirum recte. Propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in viri tute recte gloriamur. Quod non contingeret, si id donum a Deo,
i non a nobis baberemus. At vero aut bonoribus aucti, aut re sai miliari, aut si aliud quippiam nacti sumus fortuiti boni, depulimus
i mali, cum Diis gratias agimus, tum nibil nostra laudi assumptum
i arbitramur. Num quis, quod bonus vir esset, gratias Diis egit
unquam? at quod dives, quod bonoratus, quod incolumis. Ad rem
autem ut redeam, judicium boc omnium mortalium est, fortunam a
CICERO, de Nat. Deor. lib. 3. c. 36.

"Multos et nostra civitas et Gracia tulit singulares viros quo"rum neminom, NISI JUVANTE DEO, talem suisse credendum est."

CIC. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2.

Nemo igitur vir magnus fine aliquo afflatu divino ufquam "fuit."

"Hic oft quifquam gentis ullius qui ducem naturam nactus ad virt tutem pervenire potest." Cic. Leg.

Both Cicero's and Seneca's fentiments on this subject are contradictory.

" Δεονται ξυναγωνισου θεου κος ξυλληπίορος."

Max. Tyr. Diff. 22.

^{*} James, iii. 15.

the teaching of Christianity which has not the SAVOUR OF LIFE, and was unknown in England at the reformation.

" Earthly, fenfual, devilish," are the epithets which the Apostle uses: now let us turn from the written book to the living world. Can any impartial observer deny, without affected candour, that there are many, whose conduct deserves these epithets? and can he deny, that they are chiefly among persons who seem to live without God in the world, and to be unbelievers in Revelation, though perhaps conformifts to the church? Such persons seem to delight in evil; and, like the being from whom the last of these epithets is taken, to go about, feeking whom they may devour*. No man can be much conversant in any business in the world, especially where there is competition, without meeting with men who hefitate at no falsehood or baseness, and with whom it is never fafe to have either conversation or transaction. Plaufibly pretending to courteoufnefs, to every thing just, right, and amiable, they lie in wait to deceive and to injure. They will do wanton mischief, for its own fake. They will not only demolish the fair fabric of another's happiness, but laugh over the ruins which they have made.

^{*} Read, in the following description from scripture, how men once degenerated, when estranged from God.

[&]quot;So that there reigned in all men, without exception, blood, manslaughter, theft, and diffimulation; corruption,

[&]quot; untaithfulness, tumults, perjury, disquieting of good men,

[&]quot; forgetfulness of good turns, defiling of fouls, changing of

[&]quot;kind, disorder in marriage, adultery, and shameless un-

[&]quot; cleanness." Wisbom, c. xiv. 23.—29.

How beneficial would it be for fuch persons, and for fociety, if their hearts were renewed by regenerating grace; if they could be perfuaded to believe that there really is fomething more defirable than MAMMON; fomething that contributes more to happiness, and the pleasurable enjoyment of life, than shew, equipage, living in the eyes of others, and the indulgence of an unfeeling, felfidolizing vanity, at the expence of truth, justice, mercy, and every thing that gives folid fatisfaction and real dignity. The grace of God would even ADORN them, make them more estimable and honourable, than the longest series of unmeaning titles, the most brilliant gems in a coronet, the most magnificent houses and parks, and most gailypainted vehicles. It would do more; it would liberalize and foften their hearts, and make them-MEN, fuch as the Creator intended them to be, feelingly alive to the charms of goodness, and to the touch of fympathy. The film would be removed from their eyes; and while they confulted the peace and happiness of others, they would see the things that belong unto their own. The horizon of their mental vision, now all fombrous and cloudy, would be beautifully ferene. The stream of their lives, now a desolating torrent, abruptly dashing and foaming over its banks, would flow in its proper channel, smooth and clear, bleft and bleffing in its courfe.

Surely every thinking and good-natured mortal, who observes what a despicable and detestable, or rather pitiable object, a man may become, however elevated his rank and affluent his fortune, when his heart is hardened, and he feels no sentiment of love to God, or kindness to his fellow-

creatures, must wish to promote, and gladly cooperate with others in promoting, the prevalence of the true Spirit of Christianity*. This alone, operating

* The true Spirit of Christianity can alone preserve the

CHURCH and fincere religion in fociety.

"I must profess, that I believe the DEGENERACY from the " truth and power of the Christian religion, the ignorance " of the principal doctrines of the Gospel, and that scorn "which is cast in these, and the like expressions, on the " grace of our Lord Jefus Christ, by fuch as not only profess themselves to be ministers, but of a higher degree than " ordinary, will be fadly ominous to the whole state of the " reformed church amongst us, if not timely repressed and " corrected. Dr. OWEN.

The scriptures themselves attribute the corruption of religion, and even the total loss of DIVINE KNOWLEDGE, to the reofonings of men upon it : when they regard the outward, and neglect or despise the inward testimony.

There is no truth more clearly afferted in scripture, than that the things of God are not known but by the SPIRIT OF GOD.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit " of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he " know them, because they are SPIRITUALLY discerned."

1 CoR. 11. 14.

" He that lacketh thefe things," (the graces mentioned in a preceding verse, particularly the partaking of the divine nature,) " is BLIND, and cannot fee afar off." 2 PET. i. 9.

Men wanting these graces, and this participation of the divine nature, we are expressly told, grew vain in their imaginations; profeffing themselves wife, they became fools; worshipping the creature (and among the created things is to be numbered the faculty of reasoning) more than the Greator. They spoiled the religion of Christ, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, and turned the truth of God into a lie. This was in confequence of following the rudiments of the world, nava ta soigua, according to the elements and principles of natural reason and philosophy.

Wherefore

operating by grace, can restore the depraved, sallen, wretched creature, become by his perverseness, earthly, fensual, devilish, to his proper rank, as a rational being, and to the unspeakable happiness, for which he was intended by divine benevolence.

Wherefore the Apostle would have them dead to the rudiments of the world, for they are only the commandments and doctrines of MEN, vainly puffed up by their FLESHLY mind, and science falsely so called, consisting of foolish and unlearned questions, which served only to gender strife. (2 Timii. 24.

The Apostle gives Timothy a description of human learn. ing unaccompanied with divine grace; and fays that " it is " proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and " strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil " furmifings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and " destitute of the truth." (1 Tim. vi. 4. 2 Tim. ii. 14.) He therefore bids him put them in remembrance, charging them, before the Lord, not to strive with words to no profit, but to the perverting of the hearer; for they will increase into more ungodlinefs, (they will cause infidels to grow more obstinate and disputatious in defence of their unbelief,) and their words will eat as cankers; (they will, by fubmitting the claims of Christianity to human reason only, eat up and destroy its very effence, which is divine.) Therefore he again diffuades, " foolifb and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender " ftrifes;" that inflead of fettling disputes, and confirming men in the faith, they provoke controversy, multiply doubts, and are ultimately a fruitful caufe of infidelity. " If you " are determined to rely on reasoning," faid the Tindals, Collins's, Morgans, Chubbs, and Paines, "we will accept " your challenge, and fight you with the weapons of your " own choice." They fought; and in the opinions of many deluded persons, were often victorious.

It is a fad instance of imprudence in the leaders of our Christian warfare, when they give up the fword of the Spirit, and rely entirely on the Peoples on the protection and defence. The doctrine of grace furnishes a panoply.

Mine is an humble attempt to promote the prevalence of the true Spirit of Christianity. In recommending the doctrine which this book particularly enforces, I know that I am justified by the holy scriptures*, by the church, by the tenets of the most learned and virtuous of the dissenters, and the greatest divines of this country, who have displayed their abilities either by the press or the pulpit. I claim no merit, but that of endeavouring to refcue the true and most momentous doctrine of the Gospel' from the neglect and contempt in which it has been involved, during this century, by falfe policy and partiality, expressing their rancorous hatred to fects, deemed, at various times, injurious to certain worldly interests, and temporary purposes of state. Christianity itself has been wounded by weapons, aimed only at men, whose political fentiments might perhaps be wrong, though their religious were, for the most part, strictly conformable to scripture t, and beneficial to every community.

I confess myself, in this attempt, to be only the pupil of those great masters whose opinions I have copiously cited, that they may be both an ornament and defence to my impersect manual of Christian Philosophy. Some of the greatest deceased divines of the church of England, next to the scriptures, are my chief authority. Happy am I to fit at the seet of such instructors; men,

[&]quot; He who doubts it, quarrels not with our creed, but our grammar; and instead of going to church to be infructed better, he ought to be sent to school."

Bp. HICKMAN.

[†] Many who dislike the discipline and communion of our church, sirmly adhere to the articles of it.

whose learning and abilities were of the very first magnitude, and whose piety and goodness of heart feem to have vied, for excellence, with their vigorous understandings, and accurate knowledge of scriptural theology. It is honour enough to be merely instrumental in republishing their falutary doctrines, and giving them the inconsiderable fanction of my public, though fingle vote. If they were now alive, they would be most anxiously diligent, in the present state of Christianity, in exciting the true spirit of vital and experimental religion. Never was there more occasion for their zeal and activity than now; and it appears to me, that their mode of recommending Christianity was a right mode, because, among other reasons, it has the test of experience in its favour.

The fact is incontrovertible, that in their times it was greatly fuccessful. The true spirit of Christianity, during their ministry of the Gospel, mightily grew and prevailed. Insidelity was uncommon and infamous; and the mild, meek, placid temper of the Gospel was deemed, even in the highest ranks of society, not only conducive to happiness, but ornamental. Religious grace was valued above all graceful accomplishments. Men gloried in maintaining, openly and consistently, the Christian character; and the force of truth, not weakened by false politics, made it even a fashion.

I have laboured to revive the principles of those times; not without a hope, that they may have similar success in our day, if duly encouraged by high example. Men are doubtless, now as well as ever, susceptible of religious impressions, if properly enforced on EVANGELICAL authority.

The times, it is faid, are altered; but let it be remembered, that men make the times, and that men are very much modelled by books and all public instruction.

It is certainly unwife, in the present adverse circumstances of Christendom, to neglect or discountenance any mode of effectually disseminating and confirming the Christian faith, more especially any mode which has in past times been found successful, and is authorized by scripture.

For myself, I must beg leave to say, what is indeed sufficiently evident, that I have been in search of truth, not of savour or advantage. I have deemed religion lovely enough to be wedded without a dowry. I have had no sinister view, but have employed my hours of leisure in a way which I thought might be most beneficial to my sellow-creatures and my country. If I am wrong in my dostrine; if my great masters have instructed me erroneously, I am open to conviction, and shall rejoice to be better informed. I will say with the poet, addressing the Father of Lights,

- or If I am right, thy GRACE impart,
 - "Still in the right to flay;
- " If I am wrong, O teach my HEART
 - " To find that better way.

In the mean time, I make this offering to my fellow-mortals, labouring, like myself, in pursuit of happiness, though, many of them, in a different mode; and I dedicate it, with sincere devotion, to TRUTH, PIETY, AND PEACE.



APPENDIX.

No. I.

Cursory Remarks on one or two Objections in Mr. Paine's last Pamphlet, against the authenticity of the Gospel.

It is much against my opinion of propriety to recommend to public notice, the writings of insidels, by animadverting upon them; it is still more so, to quote their cavils, though with an intent to resute them. What is this, indeed, but to contribute to the dissemination of their errors, while it gratistes their vanity? Mr. Gibbon avowed that fame was his object; and it may be suspected, that the greater part of sceptical or insidel writers are pleased with those answers and resutations, which, though they are meant to discountenance them, yet do, in sact, contribute, more than any thing else, to their publicity, notoriety, or, as they may conceive, to their glory.

But with respect to Mr. Paine, his notoriety is already so great, as scarcely to admit of increase; and there is too much reason to fear, that his insidel writings will attract general notice, at least among the lower classes, without any aid from controversial opposition. I think, therefore, I shall do no harm, if, unfortunately, I should do no good, by making one or two remarks on his recent attack on Christianity.

Mr. Paine is supposed, by his partisans, to have laid the axe to the root of revealed religion. His blows, indeed, are violent; but they miss their aim. His weapon is blunted and repelled, by striking against a solid substance. Many such strokes have, at various times, been levelled at Christianity; but the hardy tree, rooted deeply in the hearts of men, and watered by the dews of Heaven, has vegetated with fresh vigour, and, after the operation of lopping, diffused its branches with additional luxuriance.

In Mr. Paine's theological works there is, indeed, little NOVELTY. His objections have been frequently confidered, and, for the most part, removed. They are, however, NEW to the young and the unlearned, who feldom possess time, books, or inclination, fufficient to qualify them as judges of their folidity. Mr. Paine's political opinions contribute much to recommend, among many, his theological; and thus party zeal is unfortunately excited in favour of religious scepticism or actual infidelity. From a variety of causes, peculiar to the present times and circumstances, there is too much reason to apprehend, that Mr. Paine's theological pamphlet is too favourably received; and that it will contribute to diffuse licentiousness, both of principles and practice. It is not from real novelty, or the peculiar ability of the author, but from temporary circumftances, that it will derive its malignant efficacy. I am not prefumptuous enough in my own powers, to suppose myself able to counteract it. But I have attempted it throughout this book; not doubting that some of those many learned and ingenious divines, who, by their high fituation in the church, enjoy ample leifure.

leisure, possess extensive libraries, and all other opportunities for information, will step forward to oppose an attack, which tends to undermine the whole fabric of the visible Church, and which, if successful, must render their high offices not only superstuous, but ridiculous; their dignities not only badges of folly, but, which is worse, of knavish hypocrify.

Mr. Paine is an additional instance to prove that men, deeply immersed in the affairs of the world, and considering its politics as matters of the first, if not the only importance, usually bring with them dispositions to the study of Christianity, which render them blind to its EVIDENCE and EXCELLENCE. They come with a pride and considence in their own reason, a state of mind peculiarly offensive to the Sovereign of Heaven, who resistent the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

The kingdom of Christ not being of this world, they view it as aliens, not only with indifference, but disaffection. Indeed, they seldom give themselves the trouble to study, as they ought, the nature of its transcendent polity.

It is an old observation, and confirmed by daily experience, that men are apt to condemn what they do not understand. Mr. Paine, indeed, is not desicient in understanding. He has given indubitable proofs of great sagacity; but his sagacity, applied to religion, is that of the NATURAL man, as the Apostle describes him. There is a SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING; an understanding irradiated by divine grace, necessary to comprehend the things of the Spirit, without which a man is scarcely better qualified to judge of the gospel, as it is

GRACE AND TRUTH, than the blind to decide on the beauty of a picture. He may descant on words and fyllables. He may view the letter of the scriptures as a critic, a logician, an historian; but there is a veil on his heart, which prevents him from perceiving that witness or testimony of the Spirit, which carries conviction, in defiance of all difficulties and obscurities in the letter. The Gospel is the ministration of the Spirit and life, and the POWER OF GOD unto falvation. This POWER OF GOD is not to be limited in its action, to the ability of any man or fet of men to suggest or answer objections to any particular portions of the scripture. It shines on, however men may cavil. Like the moon, it continues to illuminate the night, unaffected by the poor ignorant animals who bark at her benign radiance. There is internal evidence in Mr. Paine's pamphlet, that he is unhappily unacquainted with the ministration of the Spirit and the POWER OF GOD, as it is defcribed in the Gospel, and experienced by true believers. He is out of his province, where he treats of theology, and refembles the philosopher of antiquity, who gave lectures to Hannibal, on the art of war.

But Mr. Paine is not only ignorant of Christianity; he is prejudiced against it. His politics appear to him incompatible with the power of the church; and to undermine the church, he levels his blow at the whole of Christianity. He pierces Christ, to stab the priesthood through his sides.

As the policy of monarchical countries has made the church an ally of the state, he endeavours to weaken the state, by demolishing its ally. Religion in France, corrupted by political artisice, and depraved

depraved by superstition, was favourable to slavery. He transfers his hatred from religion fo abused. to ALL religion but deifm. He confiders revelation as a mere flate contrivance; not aware that the church and kingdom of Christ subsist, independently of all external authority, in the hearts of all true believers, in every clime, united by the Holy Ghost, under their king and priest, JESUS CHRIST. The living temple of the human heart would still stand, if all the temples of stone. in the violent and wicked contentions of politicians, were demolished and swept away with the besom of destruction. The whole legions of France, supposing them united under the banners of Mr. Paine, (and I am far from thinking that the whole of that nation, or even a majority, would enlift in the cause of infidelity,) would be unable to destroy THIS TEMPLE not made with hands, not cemented with mortar, but with the Spirit of holiness and love. But Mr. Paine's PRE-JUDICE against local churches, (all which have been corrupted,) leads him, most unjustly and unphilosophically, to hate the truly CATHOLIC invifible church, which is far above the politics of this world, and too pure to admit the abuses introduced by despotism and knavery imposing upon folly.

Mr. Paine takes what has been called "a fhort way," with the Christians, or supporters of Christianity. He goes through and explodes the whole of the Old and New Testament, in the pages of a trivial pamphlet. My limits will not, at present, suffer me to enter on the objections which he makes to the Old Testament. Indeed I am ready to confess myself unable to defend or explain all those parts which are excepted against

by Mr. Paine, and appear to be really difficult and obscure. But they have often been defended and explained by others, with great learning and sagacity.

I am more particularly concerned, as indeed are all Christians, with the New Testament; and not fo much with the LETTER, as with the SPIRIT. Mr. Paine's cavils against the LETTER have been often made, and well refuted. I beg the reader, who is not firmly fettled in the faith by BETTER EVIDENCE, than any human learning can afford, to fludy with attention, adequate to the important fubject, Dr. Townson and Dr. LARDNER on the Gospels, and Mr. WEST on the Resurrection*. He will conclude, from a perufal of their excellent books, that there is cause sufficient for every pious, humble man to give his full affent to all the essential parts of the Gospel history; to be rooted in faith, to rest in hope, and to abound in charity. Let him wish Mr. Paine a BETTER MIND, and then fuffer his books to take their natural course, as many of the same kind have done, to the gulph of oblivion.

I shall advert only to one or two principal objections made by Mr. Paine, leaving the rest to those who excel and delight in critical theology. From the specimen I give, I mean no more than that the young or unlearned reader should see that Mr. Paine is not yet entitled to the epithet bestowed on one of the schoolmen, that of IRREFRAGABILIS or the UNANSWERABLE.

^{*} Dr. Trapp on the Gospels, is a very useful book for the unlearned.

I pass by the indecency and blasphemy of the introductory objections which he makes to the New Testament, with a contemptuous silence. All that is advanced on this occasion, has been well considered and answered, long before Mr. Paine was brought into existence.

I refer the reader to Dr. Townson, for a fatisfactory account of the difference in the genealogies of Christ, as given by St. Matthew and St. Luke; though I shall have occasion to mention them presently. In the mean time, I proceed to the GENERAL objection. The general objection to the credibility of the Gospel history is made by Mr. Paine in the following words:

"The presumption is," says he, "that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not

" written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

" and that they are IMPOSITIONS. The disordered thate of the history, in these few book, THE

silence of one book upon matters relat-

" ED IN ANOTHER, and the DISAGREEMENT that is

" to be found among them, implies that they are

" the productions of some unconnected indivi-

duals, many years after the things they pretend

to relate; each of whom made his own LEGEND;

" and not the writings of men, living intimately

" together, as the men called the Apostles are

" fupposed to have done; in fine, that they are

" MANUFACTURED, as the books of the Old Tef-

tament have been, by other persons than those

" whose names they bear."

This paragraph evinces Mr. Paine's ignorance of the dates of the Gospel's publication, the particular occasions on which they were written, and

the peculiar scope or purpose of each writer. It is an allowed truth, that all the Evangelists wrote a considerable time after the ascension of our Saviour, at different periods, for different purposes, from different places, to different descriptions of men; all which the reader may see well explained in Dr. Townson's discourses on the Gospel.

But for the fake of readers busily engaged in the world, who may not have read, or be inclined to read, Dr. Townson's, or other books on the subject, I will submit a few considerations, which I think, will remove this general objection, which arises chiefly from "THE SILENCE OF ONE BOOK" UPON MATTERS RELATED IN THE OTHER."

The Times and Places of writing the four Gospels were as follow:

Gofpels.	Place.	From our Lord's Afcention.	
St. Matthew's,	Judea,	64 yrs.	
St. Mark's,	Rome,	64	
St. Luke's,	Greece,	64	
St. John's,	Ephefus,	68	
Or,	according to Dr. O	wen,	
St. Matthew's,	Jerusalem, for th	he	
use of the Ferv	h converts,	38	
St. Luke's,	Corinth, for the u	le of	
the Gentile conv	erts,	53	
St. Mark's,	Rome, for the ufe		
Christians at la	rge,	63	
	Ephefus, to confut	e the	
herefy of CERI		69	
The			

The times of writing are differently given by the learned Dr. Mill, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament: thus,

fer	T	al Constitution				An	Dom.
St.	Matth	lew wro	ote		_		ór
St.	Mark,	110 m mark	-		_	(53
St.	Luke,	to see well		4.4.2	-		64
St.	John,		P No.	i sa Sir	4	4	97

Each of the Evangelists had a particular view or intention in writing his Gospel history; at the same time that he calculated it for general information, in all ages of militant Christianity.

By the way, I must observe, that the distance of time from our Lord's ascension, to the writing of the Gospels, (erroneously stated by Dr. Watts. in the quotation from him in the preceding pages,) furnishes me with an argument in favour of my main doctrine. During fixty, feventy, or perhaps. nearly a hundred years, Christianity flourished without the affistance of any written Gospel. This must have been by the Spirit's immediate influence. It does not appear, that when the apostolical epistles were written, any of the Gospels which we now have, were extant or known. They are not mentioned in the epiftles, nor is there any allufion to them. Yet it is clear from the epistles, that there were large churches or focieties of Christians -without a written Gospel-except that which was written on the heart of the humble believer by the Spirit's ministration:

To return to Mr. Paine's objection, concerning the "filence of one Gospel on matters related in another."

This will not appear at all wonderful, when it is confidered, that St. Matthew wrote to the Jews only; St. Mark, (under the distation of St. Peter,) to ALL Christians; St. Luke, to the GENTILE converts; St. John, to heretics, who denied the pre-existence

pre-existence and divinity of Christ; and that they wrote at very distant places, and at very different times, under circumstances probably no less various. But, to be a little more particular. St. Matthew wrote at Jerusalem, to the Fews only; those, I mean, of the Jews, who were converted to Christianity. As they lived near the scene of action, and many of them had probably observed our Saviour, and heard his discourses, he omitted many things, as well known to them, and mentioned others with a conciseness which he would not have approved, had he been writing to foreigners, or persons totally unacquainted with the subjects of his history. The other Evangelists very properly vary from him in explaining what he left less distinct, in expatiating where he observes a brevity, in adding what he omitted; as was reasonable, fince they wrote confiderably after him, and to persons who, it must be supposed, were unacquainted with the customs, the language, and even the country of Judea.

If it be asked, what becomes of the inspiration of the Gospels, if the writers thus conducted them according to the rules of human prudence? I answer, in the words of Dr. Townson, "The Holy Spirit" sanctified their hearts with a lively and powerful fense of spiritual things; enlightened their minds with a just knowledge of the truth; and endued them, with wisdom, (or prudence,) to relate the life of Christ in a manner becoming the subject, and suitable to their several designs: and these gifts, which exalted the natural powers of their minds, without destroying them, would produce verity and propriety, but not identify of relation." They reported such words and deeds,

as conduced to the purpose of converting or establishing the persons whom they immediately addressed; while the Spirit of God took care that the whole of their history, as contained in four narratives, should convey information sufficient, in all necessary points, not only for their own age, but for all ages of Christianity.

"They VARY," fays the objector, "and there-" fore they cannot be true and faithful narrators." But in what do they vary? Does one of them fay that our Saviour rofe from the dead, and the other, that he did not? Do they vary in any important point of DOCTRINE? No; but they vary in a few historical circumstances, which affect not the MAIN PURPOSE in the smallest degree. their variations in non-effentials, and their agreement in essentials, is a mark of veracity. Their variations prove that they did not write in concert, or with a defign to deceive; for if they had, they would have taken care to have avoided what would expose them immediately to the objections of their opponents; and their agreement in effentials, in the grand purpose of shewing that Man was to be favoured with the Holv Spirit, is a proof that Providence superintended them; and that they were fo ftrongly convinced of this truth, and had it so present to their minds, that they could not possibly omit it, or vary in it, however elfe they might vary.

Theophylact fays, very fenfibly, * Δι' αυθο τουτο μαλλον αληθευουσιν, οτι μη κατα πανθα ωμοφωνησαν. ενομιθησαν γας αν, οτι συγκαθισαντες αλληλοις και συμβουλευσαμενοι, εγςαψαν. νυν δε ο παςελειψεν ουτος, εγςαψεν εκεινος και δια τουτο, δοκουσιν εν τισιν διαλλατθειν.

^{*} Theophylact. Proum. in Matt. Evangelium.

"On this very account," fays Theophylact, "they may be more easily believed to have spoken the truth, because they do not every where speak alike; for if they had, they would have been fupposed to have written in collusion; but, as the case is now, what one is filent upon, another has written; and, therefore, they appear in some things to differ;"—but they differ to top the xiototop, in very minute things—as he had just before observed. Still keeping in mind, that Mr. Paine's chief objection is, "the silence of one book (of the Gospel) upon matters related in the other," let us now proceed to St. Mark.

St. Mark's Gospel was dictated by St. Peter, who was acquainted with St. Matthew's. It was in many things anticipated by St. Matthew. It was published in Italy, perhaps at Rome, and addressed to Christians in general; but particularly to the new converts, both pagan and Jewish. Some of them might have already feen St. Matthew's Gofpel, and all of them might hereafter fee it; and therefore St. Mark is filent on many precepts and parables, as being already known from the narrative of his predecessor. In some matters, St. Mark explains and describes more fully than St. Matthew, because he addressed himself in part to the Gentiles, who could not know fo well as the Jews, to whom alone St. Matthew wrote, what related to the Tewish language, customs, fcriptures, or topography. When he repeats, which is very often, for very good reasons, what St. Matthew has told, he adds some circumstance of explanation, necessary to the Gentiles, that is, to foreigners, who were very little acquainted with either the country or the inhabitants of Jerusalem. It was necessary to

repeat many facts related by St. Matthew, because; in that age, the art of printing being unknown, and copies of the Gospels very difficult to be procured, especially by the poor, it must, in the nature of things, have happened frequently, that the persons for whom St. Mark wrote, Jews at a great distance from Judea, and pagans, (both newly converted,) had never had a fight of St. Matthew's Gospel. Very difficult must it have been, in those days to have fent many copies from Jerusalem to Rome, even if many existed, and if the converts near Jerusalem had not demanded ALL that could be multiplied by the flow process of the handwriting. St. Mark's narrative is therefore nearly the fame as St. Matthew's, with the addition of fuch matters as might be necessary to the persons immediately addressed; and the omission of other matters which were either not essential, or, if they were, might be learned from St. Matthew's Gospel, already published.

St. Mark, it has been already said, is supposed to have written under the entire direction, or rather the dictation, of St. Peter; and it is observable, that St. Peter is represented as present at all the actions and sayings of our Lord recorded in this Gospel. And this circumstance will account for St. Mark's "filence on some "matters" related by the other Evangelists." The narrative of St. Mark seems to be RESTRICTED, in great measure, to such transactions as St. Peter was present at; which, while it adds to the authenticity of the narrative, accounts for the omission of deeds or words, at which St. Peter was not present, and thus obviates Mr. Paine's objection.

St. Luke's Gospel was designed for the Gentiles Of this there is much internal evidence. He studiously avoids Hebrew words, and uses, wherever it can be done, Greek terms, to express the ideas of the Hebrew. And there is one most striking particular in St. Luke, which arose from his addressing the Gentiles only. The fine PARA-BLE OF THE PRODIGAL, to be found in none other of the Gospels, was admitted by St. Luke, because it conveyed a doctrine highly encouraging to the GENTILE, who was that younger fon, returned, at last, to his father, and received with affection. St. Matthew is filent upon this parable, because writing, as he did, to the Jews, he knew, especially at that earlier period when he wrote, that it would not be agreeable to their narrow prejudices, and their ideas of exclusive falvation. St. Mark and St. John are filent upon it, because it was not necessary to their purposes.

St. Luke's genealogy of Christ differs much from St. Matthew's; and Mr. Paine triumphs greatly on the difference*. But let it be duly noticed, that St. Matthew, writing to the Jews only, was contented with tracing the genealogy of the Messiah, for their satisfaction, up to David and Abraham; while St. Luke, writing to the Gentiles, traced it up to ADAM, the sather of all mankind, Gentile as well as Jew; thus encouraging the Gentiles, by making it appear that they, as descendants of Adam, were also related to the Messiah, as well as the Jews.

Another remarkable circumstance in St. Luke, evinces that the Evangelists adapted their narra-

^{*} See Trapp on the Gospels.

tives, as wisdom directed, to the particular descriptions of persons to whom they were immediately addressed. St. Luke mentions the name of the Roman emperor that reigned when Christ was born, and when himself began to preach. It was the practice of the Gentiles to mark the æra of events by the reigning emperor. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. John observe a silence concerning the reigning emperor. It did not appear to them necessary or expedient to use this mode of dating events, when writing to Jews, or persons acquainted with Judea and its history.

Let it be attended to, that there were in circulation, before some of the Gofpels were written, a great many narratives (diagnosis) of our Saviour's life and death, by unknown authors, which being read in certain parts, might render it unnecessary to dwell on fome particulars which they might have recorded with truth and accuracy. It has long been my opinion, (but I offer it with the diffidence of one who ventures a conjecture,) that the four Gospels which we now have, were written to fupply the defects, correct the errors, and give confirmation to the truths, which appeared in these popular narratives, at which St. Luke feems to hint in the very entrance or introduction to his Gospel. St. Luke speaks not, when he says, that MANY had taken in hand to fet forth in ORDER a declaration of those things which are most surely believed by us, he speaks not of ST. MATTHEW or ST. MARK by name. He gives them no preference. He could not mean by MANY, two only. He probably

which he feems to censure for inaccuracy. It would be highly credible, (if we had not information) that there were narratives handed about of merely human composition. Such events as had happened in Judea must have excited curiosity; and the pleasure of relating extraordinary events naturally prompted men to gratify it. Gospel histories, therefore, abounded. The Gospels of the four Evangelists were varied, according as the necessity which appeared to exist from the errors, the defects, or misrepresentations of the diagnosus, or narratives, which were circulated among the persons to whom the four Evangelists wrote, seemed to require.

But to proceed to St. John. He wrote a great many years after St. Matthew. The history of Christ, at near a hundred years after his ascension, was probably pretty well known by the Gospels, and the common narratives called diagnosis and mapadoous. He wrote chiefly to correct mistakes in DOCTRINE; giving at the same time a narrative for the use of those who might still be uninformed in the history. He wrote against a heresy. He

had

^{*} There were many diagnosis and magadorsis. But there were two very celebrated, and called Gospels; the one, according to the Hebrews; the other, according to the Ægyptians. These were a collection of facts and sayings, collected from oral tradition. The sirst maintained its credit long after the publication of the sour Evangelists, and was a savourite Gospel. It was read in the church during three hundred years. Some think, and I subscribe to their opinion, that this was the original Hebrew of St. Matthew. But there arguments are not wanting to prove that it was another.—See this very curious subject discussed in Milli Proleg.

had to set men right as to the dignity of Christ. Therefore there are many things in this Gospel on which the others are SILENT; and he, on the other hand, is filent on many things, because repetition of what they had given the world would have been either of little use, or quite superstuous, to the persons whom he immediately addressed.

By thus fairly confidering the different times, places, persons, and other circumstances, in which the several Gospels were written, we shall not be at a loss to account rationally, and to the satisfaction of every GOOD MIND, for omissions, variations, and additions, in the evangelical histories; and the unbelievers will never, it is to be hoped, prevail upon serious, humble Christians, who love truth, and seek it with simplicity of heart, unbiassed by politics, or worldly motives, to remounce the WRITTEN WORD, much less the SPIRIT of Christianity.

But though the written word were proved to contain many marks of human infirmity, lapfes of memory, and errors of judgment, yet the good Christian, having the WITNESS IN HIMSELF, would go on his way, rejoicing, hoping, and believing to the end. If no other event had been announced in the WRITTEN WORD, than that (agreeably to general and uniform TRADITION) the Holy Ghost was sent to reside among men, after our Lord's afcention, this alone would be GLAD TIDINGS, or an evangelium fufficient to make him exult in the name and privileges of a Christian. If the four Gospels are uninspired, yet the writers, as good men and firm believers, were certainly under the ordinary influence of the Holy Spirit, and related the truth as exactly as their abilities

abilities qualified them for narration. They had, most evidently, no intention to deceive. Impostors could never have written with fuch simplicity. So that though their histories should be found not quite exempt from human errors, as no other history ever was exempt, yet still the main point of revelation is clear. The gift of the Spirit is announced by them. It has in all ages of the church been EXPERIENCED; and though all the books in the world were deftroyed, it would remain. The tradition is now too extensive to be ever loft. And what mortal, who, as the poet fays, comes into the world "just to look about " him and to die," will prefume to fay, that the ETERNAL GOD cannot make his will known to man, by constant and immediate revelation, without the aid of the penman or the printer? Disputants, indeed, contending for praise and preferment, will wrangle on this, and all other points; but while they wrangle, the humble Christian believes, and is happy.

There are two particulars of variation, which Mr. Paine lays great stress upon, and which, therefore, I shall take under cursory consideration.

- ist. "Not any of these writers," says he, "agree in reciting exactly the written inscription,
- " fhort as it is, which they tell us was put over
- " Christ when he was crucified. Matthew says
- " it was, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews;
- " Mark, The King of the Jews; Luke, This is the
- " King of the Jews; John, Jesus of Nazareth, the
- " King of the Jews."

This objection has no more claim to novelty than importance; and I only confider it, to shew the unlearned reader how easily it may be obviated Let him conclude, as he may fairly do, that most of Mr. Paine's objections, however plausible, may, upon impartial examination, be removed.

The words on the cross were in THREE languages; Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. St. Matthew, writing to the Hebrews, probably selected that which was in their own language, in which the word Jesus signifies a Saviour. As this was intended to be read by the Jews, it might be designed, by Pilate's advisers, to heighten the insult and mockery, by calling Christ a Saviour, as well as a king: in Hebrew, it certainly admitted of that interpretation, while it also stood for a proper name.

St. Mark, writing at Rome, probably felected the Latin words.—Latin was Pontius Pilate's own-language; and he, probably, as it is well known was the case with the Romans, prided himself in not using any other language than his own; so he omits, in this inscription, which being Latin, may be supposed to be of his own dictation, the Hebrew words Jesus and Nazareth, and inserts, consistently with the usual brevity of Latin inscriptions, Rex Judæorum—the King of the Jews.— Indeed the words, This is, were in course understood, and might be supplied by the Evangelists; but they were inserted by St. Matthew, and were common to all the inscriptions. St. Luke, like St. Mark, took his from the Latin Rex Judæorum.

St. John's is probably from the Greek inscription, and he says, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the "Jews," which, there is no doubt, was an exact translation of the Greek words. He says, addressing foreigners, as the inscription itself also did, "Jesus of Nazareth." The word Jesus would not

convey the idea of a Saviour to the Greeks; it was to them only a proper name, therefore he adds the Nazarene, or " of Nazareth," as a matter of historical information. The Jews knew the native place of Jesus, but the Greeks did not, as Nazareth was an inconfiderable town. This addition might be intended as a mark of contempt, and to shew the Greeks, or foreigners in general, that the Jews disdained a king who originated from fo paltry a place as Nazareth. Nathaniel's question in St. John is, " Can any good thing come " out of Nazarethi" Thus it appears, that the inscription being in three different languages, might, for very good reafons, in the opinion of those who placed it over the cross, have some variations adapted to the various readers, and confistent with the views of the various writers.

Mr. Paine adds, that "Mark fays Christ was "crucified at the third hour—nine in the morning; and John fays, it was the fixth hour—
"twelve at noon." Here a note is added in the margin; "According to St. John, sentence was "not passed till the fixth hour, (noon,) and confequently the execution could not be till the afternoon; but Mark says expressly, he was crucified at the third hour—nine in the morning.

Here certainly is a difficulty; but the learned have informed us that St. John parted the days as we do, at midnight*, contrary both to the Roman and Jewish custom; the fixth hour, therefore, is not noon, but fix o'clock in the morning, when sentence was passed; and various circumstances might take place, added to the slowness of the

^{*} According to the Nuchthemeron.

procession, to retard the execution till nine, the very time fixed by St. Mark. St. John's method of dividing the day was not Jewish or Roman, as it has been said, but ASIATIC. St. John either learned or taught this method in Asia Minor, where were seven churches, which differed from others in the time of keeping Easter; and affirmed, that they followed, in this variation of times and seasons, the institution of St. John; a circumstance which is very material, as it shews that St. John had turned his attention to the regulation of time.

Dr. Townson, to whom every student of the LITERAL Gospel is much indebted, advances other arguments on this head, for which I refer to his Discourses.

It is inconfistent with my ideas of propriety to quote many of Mr. Paine's objections*; and indeed my limits will not admit a full examination of his book, if I were inclined to go through it, or, on the present occasion, thought it necessary.

In answer to what Mr. Paine has said against that part of the evangelical history which relates to the interment, resurrection, and ascension of our Saviour, I refer the reader to another volume of Dr. Townson's, expressly written on these subjects, if any one thinks it necessary to re-consider them, on account of Mr. Paine's objections. My opinion is, that they who have the witness of the Spirit, will not be at all concerned about Mr. Paine's cavils, except from the benevolent motive of endeavouring to prevent their ill effect on the thoughtless and malignant part of mankind, who

^{*} I would not cull the flowers of those weeds, whose roots I wish to destroy.

may be confirmed in their neglect or hatred of Christianity, by his virulent invective against it.

Those who believe, not only with an historical faith, but with the FAITH THAT GOD GIVETH; not only in the letter, written on perishable materials, but also, in the Spirit, the everlasting Gospel of immediate grace, will not be in the least danger of wavering, even if the insidels could prove that the scriptures are merely human narratives, with the errors of humanity.

It is prefumptuously said by Hosius, bishop of Warmia in Poland, "We have now bid adieu to "the scriptures, having seen so many, not only

"different, but contrary interpretations of them.

"Let us rather hear God himself speak, than ap-

" jejune elements. There is no need," he proceeds, " of being skilful in the law and the scrip-

" tures, but of being taught of God. That labour is ill employed," fays the prelate, " that

" is bestowed on the scriptures; for the scripture

" is a creature, and a beggarly element." Far be from us to think fo. Christ commanded his immediate hearers to search the scriptures; and St.

Paul fays, " they are profitable for doctrine, for " reproof, for correction, for instruction in

" righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;"

that is, they are profitable, or conducive to the improvement of us in morality, as well as in the true doctrine. But although we cannot fay what Hosisis erroneously said; yet we may say, because

the scripture says it, "God's grace is sufficient for "us"—his grace mediately afforded by his word, and immediately by his actual influence; and having

the TEACHING OF GOD, we shall not renounce our faith, though the Chubbs and the Paines should find matter for censure or ridicule in all the written books, from Genesis to the Apocalypse. FAITH, we read and know, is the gift of God; and he it is who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

"The word," fays Dr. Ridley, "has not power of itself to work, in our UNDERSTAND"INGS, a faith in God, nor to influence the will to a repentance from dead works, without the Holy Ghost."

But he in whom the Holy Ghost has worked a faith in God, and whose will the Holy Ghost has influenced to repentance from dead works, may stand fast in the faith, rooted and established, in defiance of all that has been said by men engrossed by this world, and possessing its wisdom; men who have arisen in almost every age, and comfirmed the Christian doctrine, by promoting its discussion, and awakening Christians from the slumber of security.

"When," fays Dr. Watts, "we are attacked with argument to baffle our faith, and when false doctrines blow strong, and carry away many, how shall we be able to stand our ground, and hold fast our faith in Christ, if we have not the inward witness, the BEGINNING OF ETERNAL LIFE? Therefore it is that so many Christians waver and are led away, because they feel so little of the efficacy of the Holy Ghost in their hearts.

If this then be the cause of wavering and falling away from Christ, I hope the believers in Christianity, and lovers of their fellow-creatures, will second fecond, by their endeavours, this attempt of mine, to promote the prevalence of a belief in the energy of the Holy Grost. The attempt is exposed to calumny and violent opposition. But every thing is to be borne with patience, in the cause of God and man.

Mr. Paine professes to be a believer in God, and a friend to man. It is, indeed, astonishing, that an advocate for the rights of man should set his face against the Gospel of Jesus Christ; for it is certain that the Gospel is the book, of all that were ever written, that favours most the rights of man, and the cause of equal liberty. Jesus Christ abolished slavery in Europe. Jesus Christ has humbled the rich and mighty. Jesus Christ has given a consequence to the room, which they

*The New Testament abounds with passages, expressive of indignation against those among RICH men, who abuse wealth and power, for the purposes of oppression, cruelty, and despotism. As a specimen, I quote the following from the Epistle of St. James.

"Go to, now, ye RICH men; weep and howl for your miferies that shall come upon you.

" Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are mother eaten.

"Your gold and filver is cankered, and the rust of them fhall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it

were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

"Behold the HIRE OF THE LABOURERS WHICH HAVE ERAPED DOWN YOUR FIELDS, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them that have REAPED

" are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

"Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of

" Ye have condemned and killed the just."

James, v. 1-6.

never possessed amid the boasted freedom of Greece and Rome. Jesus Christ has done more to destroy the infolent distinctions which arose from the spirit of tyranny, than was ever done before or after him; and Jesus Christ suffered death for this benefaction to all mankind, as a feditious innovator, and an enemy to Cæfar. Jesus Christ is therefore entitled to the gratitude of every friend to truth. justice, and humanity, even if he were no more than a man, and his religion untrue. What have Sydney, Hampden, Locke, done or faid, with fuch effect, in the cause of liberty, and in favour of the mass of mankind, as Jesus Christ? Let then all the friends of liberty and man be lovers of Yesus Christ; and let not their zeal for reforming the corruptions of Christianity, caused by statesmen, wishing to render it subservient to political views, lead them to renounce the comfortable, liberal, equalizing doctrines of the genuine Gospel.

The Gospel recommends PEACE, and infallibly produces, by the Spirit's benign influence, such dispositions of mind, as must of necessity, if they were to prevail among the rulers of the world, put an end to all offensive war. It has not yet done so, for it has not yet sufficiently prevailed among the rulers of the world. But it has certainly softened the rigours of war; a favourable presage of its suture essicacy, in totally abolishing it.

I wish Mr. Paine, as a politician and a philanthropist, if he be such, not to oppugn the great promoter of PEACE and LIBERTY. As a fellow man, (I wish I could add, a fellow Christian,) I warn him, from the kindest motives, to beware

left he be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Mr. Paine himself says, " The great trait in the " character of Jesus Christ is PHILANTHROPY." Why should Mr. Paine, then, oppose the prevalence of his benign doctrines? Christianity is a friend to order, but an enemy to despotism of every kind and degree. Why should Mr. Paine, then, join with the wicked despots of the earth, in the endeavour to exterminate Christianity? The late KING OF PRUSSIA, the greatest despot and butcher of mankind, was the prince of the unbelievers. He made infidelity a fashion in France; and behold the confequences! May they never extend to this country; where, God grant that LIBERTY may continue unimpaired by despotism or licentioulness; and RELIGION flourish, uncorrupted by hypocrify or superstition, and unshaken by the affaults of infidelity.

No. II.

Since, in conformity to the Scriptures, I have recommended PRAVER* as one of the best modes of obtaining the evidence and experiencing the excellence, of the Christian religion, I think it expedient to add some directions to facilitate the proper performance of this duty; and, for the sake of AUTHORITY, I have selected them from Bishop WILKINS, the first divine and philosopher of his age.

"The first and chief matter to be prayed for, is the sanctification of our natures—that God's kingdom may come into our hearts—that he would give unto us a new heart, and put a new Spirit within us—that he would take from us our stony heart, and bestow upon us hearts of slesh—that he would put within us the law of the spirit of life, which may make us free from the law of sin and death—that we may put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness—that we may be regenerate, and become new creatures, being born again of that incorruptible seed, the word of God.

* Πολυ ιχυει ΔΕΗΣΙΣ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΥ ΕΝΕΡΓΟΥΜΕΝΗ.

Jam. v. 16.

This is translated, "The effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much," which is tautology—for an effectual prayer, of course, availetb. It should be translated, "The prayer of a righteous or just man, being ENERGIZED by the inward operation of the Spirit, availeth much."

"That God would grant us, according to the

" riches of his glory, to be strenghtened with

" might by his Spirit in the inward man.

"That he would establish our hearts unblamea-

" ble in holiness before God, even our Father, at

" the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, with all

" his faints.

"That the Spirit of Christ may dwell in us-

" that we may continue in the grace of God, and

" in the faith, grounded and fettled, and may not

" be moved away from the hope of the Gospel.

" Of this kind is the petition of David for him-

" felf-Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew a right spirit within me. And the Apostle for

" others—The God of peace fanctify you through-

out, that your whole spirit, and foul, and body

" may be preferved blameless unto the coming of

" our Lord Jefus Chtift.

"That we may be transformed by the renewing of

" our minds—that we may be able to have a spiritu-

" al discerning of the things of God; being wife to

" that which is good, but simple and harmless to

" that which is evil.

"That he would purge our consciences from

" DEAD WORKS, to serve the living God."

"That they may be tender of his glory, and our own good; truly performing the offices

" which belong unto them, both in accusing and

" excusing us, according to the several occasions.

« Ezekiel, xxxvi. 26. Rom. viii. 7. Eph. iv. 24. 1

" 1 Theff. iii. 13. Rom. viii. 11. Acts, xiii. 43. Col. ii. 13. Pfal. li. 10. 1 Theff. v. 23. Rom. xii. 2. 1

" Cor. ii. iv. Rom. xvi. 19.

" That

"That he would circumcife our hearts, that we may fet our affections on things above, and not on

" earthly matters—that we may not be deceived

" with false appearances, but may approve the

" things that are most excellent.

"That he would reform and fanctify our wills, "that we may in every thing submit them unto

" his; delighting to do his will; not feeking our own

" will, but the will of him that fent us.

"That he would rectify our memories, making

"them more faithful in retaining all fuch holy lessons as we shall learn, in recalling them to

" mind, according to opportunities; that we may

" be always ready to fir up our minds by way of re-

" membrance, that we may never forget God.

" And fo (for our parts, or outward man,) that

" we may become the temple of God where his Spirit

" may dwell: that we may prefent our bodies a living

facrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our nea-

" fonable fervice: that all our parts and members may

" be instruments of righteousness unto holiness.

" In which defires we may strengthen our faith

" with fuch arguments as thefe:

"God only is able for this great work: in us

" dwelleth nothing that is good. It is he that must

work in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

" It is not in our power to regenerate ourselves;

" for we are not born of blood, nor of the will of the

" flesh, nor of the will of man; (that is, of natural created strength,) but of God. And he is able to

[&]quot;Heb. ix. 14. Rom. ii. 29. Col. iii. 2. Phil. i. 10. "Pf. xl. 8. Joh. v. 30.

[&]quot; 2 Pet. iii. 1. Deut. viii. 11. 1 Cor. iii. 16. Rom. " xii. 1. Rom. vi. 13-19. Rom. vii. 18. Phil. ii. 13. Joh. i. 13.

"do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. It is as easy for him to make us good,

" as to bid us be fo.

" He is willing, and hath promifed to give unto " us a new Spirit: to put his law into our inward " parts, to write it in our hearts. And if men that " are evil know how to give good gifts to their children, " how much more shall our Heavenly Father give the " Holy Spirit to them that ask him? He hath profes-" fed it to be his own will, even our fanctification; " and he cannot deny us the performance of his " own will. He hath promised, that those who " hunger and thirst after righteousness, shall be filled. " And therefore, if he has in any measure given " us this hunger, we need not doubt that he will " give us this fulness likewise. He hath said that " he delights to dwell with the sons of men. And what " reason have we to doubt the success of our de-" fires, when we beg of him to do that which he

" The next thing to be prayed for, is the obedience of our lives, answerable to that in the

" Lord's Prayer—thy will be done on earth as it

in Heaven. And here, likewise, we are to peti-

" tion for spiritual grace, and abilities, both to perform, and to continue, and to increase in all

" holy duties.

"For the performance of them, That he would lead us into the paths of righteousness—that with simplicity and Godly sincerity we may have our con-

[&]quot;Eph. iii. 20. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Jer. xxxi. 33. Luke, "xi. 13. Thef. iv. 3. Mat. v. 6. Prov. viii. 31. "Pfal. xxiii. 2 Cor. i. 12. Tit. ii. 12. Heb. xii. 28. "Rom. xii. 2. 1 Pet, ii. 21.

" versation in this world—that denying all ungodliness

" and worldly lusts, we may live foberly, righteously,

" and godly, in this present world—that God would

" give us grace, whereby we may serve him acceptably

" with reverence and godly fear—that we may not any

more be conformed unto this world—that being dead unto fin, we may live unto righteoufnefs: not any

" longer spending the rest of our time in the stesh, to the

" lusts of men, but to the will of God—that the time

" past of our lives may Suffice to have served divers

" lufts-that for the future we may walk as obedient

" children, not fashioning ourselves according to the

" former lufts of our ignorance; but as he who has called

" us is holy, so we may be holy in all manner of

se conversation.

"To this purpose is that desire of David, O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes! And in

" another place, Teach me to do thy will, for thou

" art my God: let thy good Spirit lead me into the land

of uprightness. Elsewhere—Shew me thy ways, O

" Lord, and teach me thy paths: lead me into thy truth,

" and teach me; for thou art the God of my Salvation.

" Teach me thy ways, O. Lord, and I will walk in thy

" truth; unite my heart to fear thy name.

" For our continuance in them—That we may ferve him without fear, in holiness and righteous-

" ness before him, all the days of our lives : being

" stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the

work of the Lord-Holding faith and a good con-

" science-Patiently continuing in well-doing, without

" 1 Pet. iv. 2, 3. Ib. i. 14. Psal. cxix. 5, Psal. cxliii.
" 10. Ib. xxv. 4, 5. Ib. lxxxvi. 11.

[&]quot; ii. 7. Gal. vi. 9. Heb. x. 23. Ib. xxxi. 9. Job, ii. 3. " 1 Thef. ii. 17. 2 Cor. ix. 8.

" weariness, as knowing that in due time we shall reap,

" if we faint not-Holding fast the profession of our

" faith, without wavering—that our hearts may be

" established with grace; that amidst all our outward

" changes and loffes, we may still hold fast our integrity.

"Thus the Apostle prays for the Thessalonians, that God would establish them in every good word

" and work.

" For our increase in them-That God would

" make all grace to abound towards us—that we always having all-sufficiency to all things, may abound

" to every good work-that we may be strong in the

" Lord, and in the power of his might: being filled

" with the fruits of righteousness, unto the glory and

" praise of God—that forgeting those things which are behind, and reaching unto those things which

" are before, we may continually press towards the

" mark for the prize of the high calling of God.

" Thus doth the Apostle pray for the Hebrews-

"The God of peace make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is

" well-pleasing in his sight.—And Epaphras, for the

" Coloffians-That they might fland perfect and

" complete in all the will of God.

" Next to the precepts of the law, we are to

" consider the duties which the Gospel requires

of us, namely that we should repent and believe—

" that we should be careful to perform, to continue,

" and increase in all those particular duties and

" graces which are comprehended under those two general heads.

"1 Thef. iv. 1. Eph. vi. 10. Phil. i. 11. Ib. iii. 14. Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Col. iv. 12.

so that from hence we are directed to pray,

" For repentance-That fince God hath, in love

" to our fouls, vouchsafed unto us, in his Gospel,

"this privilege of repentance, which the covenant of works did not admit of, that he would also

" give us hearts for it, granting us repentance unto

" life—that he would convince us of the danger,

" and folly, and pollution of our fins, enabling

" us to mourn over them; bestowing upon us

" broken and contrite spirits-dissolving our stony

" hearts into that godly forrow, which worketh re-

of pentance to falvation not to be repented of That

" we may fearch and try our ways, and turn unto

" the Lord-Bringing forth fruits meet for repen-

" tance-Labouring to draw nigh unto God, by clean-

fing our hands, and purifying our hearts.

" For faith—That God would discover to us

" the great need of a Saviour; and fince he hath

" fet forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, and hath made him the Author of

" eternal falvation to all that obey him, that he would

" win over our fouls to an earnest endeavour of

" acquaintance with him, and high efteem of him.

"That God, who commandeth the light to shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge

" of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ-

that he would make us more especially inquisi-

" tive after the faving experimental knowledge of

" him, in whom are laid up the treasures of wif-

" dom and knowledge; whom to know, is wisdom,

" and eternal life.

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[&]quot; Acts, xi. 18. Pfal. li. 17. 2 Cor. vii. 10. Lam. iii, " 40. Mat. iii. 8.

[&]quot;James, iv. 8. Rom. iii. 25. Heb. v. 9. 2 Cor. iv. 6. Col. ii. 3.

"That he would count us worthy of his holy call-

" ing, and fulfil in us all the good pleasure of his

" goodness, and the work of faith with power-that

" the name of the Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in

" us, and we in him.

"That Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith,

" that we may be rooted and grounded in love; may be

able to comprehend with all faints what is the

" breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,"

that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.

"That we may truly value the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through

" Christ Jesus-Glorying in his Gospel, as being

" the power of God to falvation-Counting all things

" but loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge

" of Christ Fefus, that we may win him, and be found

in him; not having our own righteousness, which is

of the law, but that which is through the faith of

" Christ.

"That in all estates and conditions, we may

" learn to live by faith.

" In regard of our temporal life, with all the

" various circumstances of it, whether prosperity,

" that by his grace of faith, we may keep our

" hearts in an holy frame of humility, meekness,

" difengagement from the world, and all outward

" confidences; or adversity, wherein this grace

" may ferve to sweeten our afflictions, to support

" us under them, to bear them meekly, to triumph

" over them; affuring the heart, that nothing is

"but by the disposal of God's providence, who is infinitely wise, and merciful, and faithful.

« 2 Thef. i. 11, 12. Eph. iii. 17. Ib. ii. 7. Rom. i. 16. Phil. iii. 8.

" In regard of Spiritual life, both for our " own justification, that we may not expect it " from our own fervices or graces; not having " our own righteousness, but that which is through " the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is " of God by faith. And fo for the life of " Sanctification; that we may not live unto ourse felves, but unto him who died for us, and rofe " again-that our conversation may be as becometh " the Gospel of Christ, standing fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gofpel. Always remembering that we are " not our own, but bought with a price, and there-" fore should make it our business to glorify " Christ with our bodies and Spirits, which are his. "That he would work in us a lively faith, as " may make us rich in good works, that we may " demean ourselves as becomes our professed subject " tion to the Gospel of Christ; walking worthy of that wocation wherewith we are called; as becomes " children of light-Being holy in all manner of cont to versation-putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; exer-" cifing ourselves unto godlines - Walking uprightly, according to the truth of the Gofpel, diligently follows ing every good work-Shewing, out of a good conversation, our works, with meekness and wisdom-66 That we may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour " in all things-Confidering that we are created in " Christ Jesus unto good works, that we should walk in them-Having our conversation in Heaven; walking worthy of the Lord, unto all pleafing, being Phil. i. 27. I Cor. vi. 20. " Phil. iii. 9. 2 Cor. v. 15. " James, ii. 20. 2 Cor. ix. 13. 66 Eph. iv. 2. Ib. v. 8. Rom. xiii, 14. 1 Tim. " iv. 7. Gal. ii. 14. 1 Tim. v. 10. James, iii. 13. "Tim. ii. 10. Eph. ii 10. Phil. iii. 20. Gal. i. 10.

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" 2 Tim. xii. 19.

⁶⁶ fruitful

" fruitful in all good works. That every one of us

" who professeth the name of Christ, may depart from

" iniquity—Because for this reason was the Gospet

" preached to those that are dead in fin, that they

" may live according to God in Spirit.

"That we may give all diligence, to add to our "faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and

" to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance,

" patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly

kindness, charity; that these things being in us,

" and abounding, we may not be barren or un-

" fruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus

" Christ, but may hereby clear up unto ourselves

" the evidences of our calling and election.

"That we may deny all ungodliness and worldly

" lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this

" present world, tooking for that blessed hope, and that

" glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour

" Jefus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto

" himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works—

" confidering that he Shall be revealed from Heaven

" with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take ven-

" geance on those who obey not his Gospel, who shall be

of punished with everlasting destruction, from the pre-

" fence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,

" when he Shall come to be glorified in his faints, and

" to be admired of all them that believe in that day—

" For if he that despised Moses's law, died without

es mercy, under two or three witnesses, of how much

" forer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath

" trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted

" the blood of the covenant an unholy thing; and hath

" 1 Pet. iv. 8. 2 Pet. i. 5-8 Tit. ii. 12, 13. 2. Theff. i. 7.

" done

done despite to the Spirit of grace. That the God of

" all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory by "Christ Jesus, would make us perfect, establish,

" frengthen, settle us—That we may continue in the

" faith, grounded and settled, and not be moved away

from the hope of the Gospel, being rooted and built up, and established in the faith—laying aside every

weight, and the fin that does so easily beset us: and

" running, with patience, the race that is fet before

" us-Holding fast our profession, without wavering;

" that we may abide in Christ, and his words may abide

" in us-Continuing in the things which we have learned

" -Being faithful unto the death, that he may bestow

" upon us a crown of life.

"That the word of Christ may dwell in us richly,

" in all wisdom-that we may grow in grace, and in

" the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

Being filled with the fruits of righteoufness,

which are by Jesus Christ; unto the glory and praise

" of God—That we may be strong in the grace

" that is in Christ Jesus.

" That having fought a good fight, and finished

" our course, and kept the faith, we may receive the

" crown of righteousness, which, at the last day, the Lord, the righteous Judge, will bestow upon all

" that love his appearing—That he would carry us,

through faith, unto falvation.

" And because, when we have reckoned all the

" duties we can, we shall leave out many particu-

" lars, therefore, for the supply of those which we cannot specify, we may use some general

" Heb. x. 28. 1 Pet. v. 10. Col. i. 23. Ib. ii. 7.

"Heb. xii. I, 2.

"Heb. x. 23. John, xv. 7. 2 Tim. iii. 14. Rev. ii. 15. "Col. iii. 16. 2 Pet. iii. 18. Phil. i. 71. 2 Tim. iv

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" form answerable to that exhortation of the

" Apostle-That whatsoever things are true,

" whatfoever things are honest, whatfoever things

" are just, what soever things are pure, what soever

" things are lovely, what soever things are of good re-

" port, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, that we may think of and do these things.

" Being blameless and harmless, the sons of God,

" without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and per-

" verse nation, among whom we may shine as lights in

" the world."

" Phil. iv. 8. 15. ii. 15.

No. III.

ΩΔΑΙ UNEYMATIKAI.

EPH. v. 19.

THE neglect of PSALMODY, in the congregations at large, has contributed very much to damp the ardour of devotion, and, confequently, to cause an indifference to the Christian religion. Less of instrumental, and more of vocal music, (in which all the people should unite with heart and voice,) would conduce greatly to the revival of decayed piety. It would render our religious assemblies interesting where they are now cold, and merely formal.

Pfalmody, it is well known, is confined, in the greater part of country churches, to a few, and is become a matter of mere amusement, both to the hearers and performers. To many, it is tedious and disgustful.

The whole congregation, women and children, as well as men, should sing simple tunes, such as are easily learned, and, at the same time, deeply affect

affect the heart, while they please the ear. The instrument should not be so loud as to drown the voices. An organ, under the hands of an ambitious player, usually overcomes the melody of the voice, and grates discord on the ear of piety.

When all join, to the best of their power, in finging well-composed hymns, all must be affected; and pfalmody will, like prayer, become a powerful means of grace. As it is now conducted, religion feems to have little or no concern with it. Some of the congregation fit with indifference or impatience; others divert themselves, as well as they can, with observing the grimaces of the fingers; while one or two, amateurs and practitioners of music, lend an ear, as critics on the skill of the performers.

The foft and fweet melody, in some of the places of religious worship frequented by various diffenting congregations in London, is highly delightful to an uncorrupted ear, while it warms the heart with devotion, meliorates the disposition, and leaves the hearer full of pious sentiments to God, and charitable affections to man. As far as I am able to judge, pfalmody requires imme-

diate reformation.

The Apostle says, "Let the word of Christ " dwell in you richly, in all wisdom, teaching and " admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, " and spiritual fongs, finging with GRACE in your " hearts to the Lord*."

Is this addressed only to ten or twelve persons in every congregation? Certainly it is addressed to all Christians; and there is no doubt but that Christianity would flourish more, if due attention were paid to psalmody. Many who are separated

from the established church, are influenced, in their separation, by the esticacious method of deriving grace into their hearts, which they experience in their own assemblies, by the pleasing, melting strains of holy harmony.

No. IV.

A short lift of books, recommended to the choice of persons who are not professional students in divinity, but who, occupied in worldly business, read, in the intervals, for the sake of improvement in piety and morality. It is not expected that such persons should procure all which are here mentioned, but select those which they may best approve, or most conveniently obtain. Doubtless there are many more which might be recommended; but, considering for whom the books are designed, I am unwilling to enlarge the collection beyond reasonable limits. I have arranged them alphabetically.

-Certainty

Gibson's Family Devotions.

Gray's Key to the Old Testament.

Hammond's Practical Catechism.

Hale's Contemplations.

Horne's Commentary on the Pfalms.

Kettlewell's Works. .

Kenn's Manual for Winchester Scholars.

Lowth's Directions for reading the Scriptures.

Lucas's Enquiry after Happiness.

Nelson's Works.

Norris's Works.

Owen's (Dr. John) Works.

Oftervald's Corruptions of Christianity.

Patrick's Works.

Pelling's Works.

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Scott's Christian Life.

Stanhope's Thomas a Kempis.

Smith's (John) Select Discourses.

Spinckes's Devotions.

Taylor's (Bishop) Works.

Trapp's Discourses on the Gospel.

Watts's Works.

Wilfon's (Bifhop) Works.

Waterland's Works—if any choose to enter into learned disquisitions on points of controverted doctrine.

No. V.

I Do not advise the true Christian to enlist himfelf under any of the celebrated system-MAKERS. Such attachments only tend to make parties in religion, and to destroy charity. The church of England is said to be Calvinistical in its Articles Articles, while the majority of its ministers are Arminians.

Dr. Morley, afterwards Bishop of Winchester, being asked what the Arminians held, pleasantly answered—that they held—all the best bishoprics and deaneries in England.

The true follower of Jesus Christ will seek no other appellation than that of Christian. He will select the true doctrine, wherever he can find it, but be bigotted to no NAME under Heaven.

" Doctrina Christi," fays Erasmus, " quæ prius

" nesciebat AOFOMAXIAN cæpit a philosophiæ studiis

" pendere : hic erat primus gradus ecclesiæ ad deteriora

" prolabentis."

On observing the various, and even contradictory tenets of the system-writers and their followers, one is tempted to exclaim with the poet,

O Gecita de la terrene menti!

In qual profonda notte,
In qual fosca caligine d'errore
Son le nostr' alme immerse
Quando tu non le illustri, O commo colle.
A che del saper vostro
Insuperbite, O miseri mortali?
Questa parte di noi, che 'ntende, e vede,
Non è nostra virtu, ma vien dal CIELO.

PASTOR FIDO, Act v. Sc. 6-



THE END